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Encounter

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Lionel Trilling

Reflections on a Lost Cause

English Literature and American Education

I MUST begin with an apology, especially to the members of the faculty who may be among my audience. For I mean to talk about a matter of the curriculum.

This is a subject which is not, I believe, intrinsically sordid. And I have no doubt that in that Platonic university to which, some day, all of us will be called, we will all go glad and singing to our ideal faculty meeting about the ideal curriculum. But here on earth things are different—here on earth the broaching of the subject of the college curriculum must inevitably bring to the faculty mind the image of multiplying committees and endless debate, of the wilfulness of colleagues, of weary failures of communication, of special interests valiantly defended, of fatigued compromises that can give satisfaction to no person, to no department, to no principle.

But in addition to apology, I can offer some degree of reassurance. The matter of the curriculum that I mean to talk about is not likely to be a topic of either lively or dreary debate. It is, I think, a lost cause. With each year the desperateness of its situation becomes more manifest.

Are you so very much surprised, are you so deeply shocked, when I say that I am referring to the study of English literature?

Perhaps you will meet my statement with incredulity. You will point to the enrolment in the English departments of our graduate schools, and you will point to the catalogues of our colleges, to the large offering (as it is called) that the English departments make to undergraduates, and you will say that never before has the study of literature been so lively as now.

I quite agree—never before has the study of literature been so lively as now. I cannot speak of all colleges and universities, but undoubtedly in the Eastern States there is an unprecedented interest in literature. It is my impression that this new, strong interest prevails in other sections of the country as well. And the interest which we find in the colleges and universities is reflected in the culture of the nation at large. The situation of literature, or of any of the arts, is never good enough, is never really good, and I do not want to seem to represent America as a nation in which literature is held in appropriate esteem, or as a nation of a peculiar fineness of taste. Yet if I look back over my own experience of our life in literature, I cannot help feeling that there is nowadays a responsiveness to literature, an easiness with it, which did not exist thirty years ago and which constitute an important change in our culture.

This article is the text of a lecture delivered by Professor Trilling at the University of the South (in Sewanee, Tennessee) and subsequently, in a somewhat different form, at other Universities.

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Yet at the same time it can be said that the study of English literature is in decline—I mean the study of the literature of England. When I was an undergraduate in the 'twenties, the study of the literature of England was the very essence, or at least the very core, of an education in the arts. It was the most important element of what used to be called the cultural part of education: that was before the word "culture" came to be used chiefly in the anthropological and sociological sense, when Matthew Arnold's meaning of the word still prevailed.

Some of you will remember that the beginning of this part of education was likely to be the so-called survey course. We began with Beowulf and for two semesters we loped through the centuries until we came to a dead stop with Stevenson or Kipling or Thomas Hardy. (Yeats was then a minor poet.) The medieval lyric, the Tribe of Ben, the Metaphysical poets, the Cavalier poets; the mystery plays, the Tudor drama, the Elizabethan drama, the Jacobean drama, the Restoration drama; Sir Thomas Browne, Burton, Addison, and Steele, the familiar essayists of the Romantic period, the prophets of the Victorian age; the Romantic poets and the Victorian poets—this was the matter of our study. The anthologies which contained this matter proliferated and their pages grew in size and beauty. They burst the bounds of a single volume and appeared with ponderous authority in two. After the survey course, the student with some appetite for culture would go on to take more advanced and specialised courses, usually in some particular period of English literature. Those to whom the appetite was lacking were presumed to have been given their chance for a well-rounded education by the survey of English literature. (Well-rounded was the word used in praise of education in those days, rather as if education were a dumpling.)

But nowadays the survey course in English literature, once universally believed to be a necessity in any curriculum, becomes increasingly rare and seems increasingly old-fashioned. In general the study of the literature of England is no longer what it once was, the very heart of the humanistic part of a college education. And in the high schools English texts are scarcely used at all—even Shakespeare barely holds a place.

There are, to be sure, exceptions among the colleges. And it is certainly true that in our graduate schools the courses in English literature are still at the centre of literary study. Yet no one who has dealings with graduate students can fail to know that, however strong their commitment to literature may be, the status of English literature is lower with them than it was with the students of twenty-five years ago. Their relation to their subject is different. They are less at ease with it. Their devotion to it is less.

To me it seems that this condition of affairs has certain consequences that are not good, and before I conclude I shall say what these consequences are. But my purpose in doing this will not be an instrumental one. I shall speak of these bad consequences only in the interest of awareness-in-general and not with any idea of trying to reverse the trend. For one thing, I believe that there is much that is good in this trend and much that is necessary. If I speak of bad consequences at all, it is with the sense that in any cultural decision you have to take the bad with the good—you have to pay something for what you get. For another thing, the trend *cannot* be reversed. The forces that make it are at the moment too powerful.

Let me say what these forces are.

Certainly the political influences on our literary education should be mentioned first. Culture and politics are always intimately related and never more than to-day, when culture has been overtly politicalised, when Unesco undertakes to serve the pride and contentment of all national cultures, when no embassy is without its cultural attaché, and when primacy in cultural matters is felt to be—or was felt to be until a few months ago—nearly as much a national advantage as primacy in science. The radical intellectuals of the 'thirties used to say that ideas are weapons, and nowadays the most respectable

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government officials understand, or try to understand, that *belles lettres* are weapons.

If we talk politically, we must talk brutally: we must say that a chief reason for the decline of the study of the literature of England is the decline of England. For certainly the bulking power of England was one of the reasons for the study of English literature in America. I don't, of course, mean to imply anything like subservience in our old strong interest in English literature. It is inevitable and expectable that the culture of a powerful nation should have a special interest. It is entirely natural that, when it is considered as an entity, it should engage the mind more than the culture of a nation that is not a dominant and decisive force in the world. The reasons may be intrinsic or they may be extrinsic: the energy, the sense of destiny, of a fate in process of unfolding, may actually find expression in a national literature to make it more interesting, or they may merely associate themselves with the national literature, creating an aura of interest around it. However the case may be, what a challenging clangour there was for us years ago in that word *Elizabethan*! It engaged the imagination with ideas of courage and vigour—not to love Elizabethan literature was not to love life. That feeling no longer exists. In my own college Shakespeare holds his pre-eminence, but undergraduates no longer have their old enthusiasm for his contemporaries. We used to jib and jibe at the Victorians, but we learned to submit our minds to Carlyle and Ruskin and Matthew Arnold, feeling that their problems were our problems; to the undergraduates of to-day they are quite alien. For us the literature of the Restoration was interesting not only in itself and not only because it was frank or lewd, but also because it was the expression of England at an important moment in its history. We said "*the* Restoration" as naturally as if it had been a monarchy of our own that had been restored. But when, a year or two ago, a course in Restoration drama was offered by a gifted and admired professor in Columbia College, it was received by the undergraduates with a stony reserve—that is, they did not register for the course—which indicated that they had no idea of who or what was being restored to what or whom, let alone how much bawdy talk had passed in the transaction.

The image of England that is now likely to exist in the American mind is not powerful enough to support a lively imagination of the literary periods that to us were so vivid. It is no longer true, as it once was, that any educated man's intellectual equipment includes a knowledge of the history of England in some considerable detail. In law and politics the connection between England and America was thought to be very close—the development of English liberties, for example, was thought to be our concern, for to these liberties we traced our own. A course in English history was part of the high school curriculum, as it no longer is. Now, even with my gifted students, I can with each year count less and less upon a knowledge of English events or an understanding of the English social system.

THE literary imagination, as Hazlitt said, allies itself with power, and tends to withdraw its attachment when power declines. At the present time it is the history and literature of their own country which most engages the minds of Americans. Nothing is more remarkable in the intellectual history of the last decades than the development of American studies in our universities. One might say that the fact ought not to be remarkable at all, that nothing could be more natural and expectable than that the history and literature of one's own country should take precedence over the history and literature of any other nation, no matter how close and relevant its culture may be to one's own culture. But thirty years ago this could be said only in a hortatory way, as calling Americans to their patriotic intellectual duty. In 1930 the late Carl Van Doren gave up his Columbia University lectures on American literature since the Civil War; it was not until fourteen years later that the University thought it necessary to institute a new course on the same subject.

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That is to say, three decades ago we were all very conscious of America, conscious of ourselves as Americans, conscious of the implications of American power, yet our consciousness was not of a kind to produce the enormous concentration on American subjects which we now witness. That had to wait upon the new sense of American destiny which came with the decline of English power.

Only then, it seems, could we really begin to think of American literature as being a separate entity, with its own special qualities which existed of and by themselves, with its own history peculiar to itself, with its own kind of development. When Matthew Arnold visited this country in 1883 he expressed astonishment, and horror, at hearing reference made to "American literature." There could be, he said, *no such thing*—there was only English literature, whether written by Englishmen or by Americans. And he expressed the hope that never would we be so provincial, so parochial, so small-minded in our national feeling, as to countenance the idea of a specifically American literature. We smile at this now. All the world recognises a particular quality in our literature which is American or nothing, and perhaps the English recognise it most of all, they see how different this quality is from the quality of their own literature. What this difference is in poetry has been very skilfully described by W. H. Auden and David Daiches in a pair of articles published last year in *The Anchor Review*. What the difference is in prose fiction has been discussed by Richard Chase in his brilliant *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. I don't mean to say that the uniqueness of American literature was not perceived and asserted until now, but it was not perceived and asserted so boldly, it was not made the informing idea of a critical and scholarly activity such as we now witness. One of the first writers to insist on this uniqueness in a significant and striking way, to say that the American mind was a new kind of mind and had done a new kind of thing, was D. H. Lawrence. His *Studies in Classic American Literature* is now universally admired and understood, but I can remember the time when it was admired and understood by a shy minority and when by most of its readers it was thought eccentric and absurd. The acceptance of its doctrine had to wait upon our present sense of American destiny, and upon the energy of self-assurance and self-examination that this permits and requires.

The new interest in American studies, I need scarcely say, has grown at the expense of the interest in English studies.

THEN we can take note of a competitor with English studies of a very different kind. Even in England the study of English literature in schools and universities is a discipline of relatively recent growth. The Honours School in English was not established at Oxford until 1893. The first chair in English literature was not established at Cambridge until 1910. The usual explanation of the development of English studies was that something in the humanistic line was needed to take the place of classical studies, which were falling into disfavour. This is much too simple a summary of the facts of the case, but for our simple purpose it will serve. The spread of democratic education in England put Greek and Latin at a disadvantage and the literature of the vernacular at an advantage. In the English universities, and in the American universities too, the disciplinary nature of English studies was insisted on: in part for the sake of the academic prestige of the new study, the systematic, the philological, the *tough* aspects of the subject were emphasised. Yet at the same time, and especially in American collegiate education, there was the desire to make use of the study of literature not merely for intellectual but for spiritual ends. Half a century ago people did not talk so unashamedly as they do now about "the whole man," or about the social usefulness of cultivating sensitivity and sympathy by means of the arts. Certainly the deans of engineering and medical schools and sociologists and the heads of industrial corporations did not conceive, as they do

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now, that humanistic subjects have some good effect upon the general intelligence and the general moral tone of a person. But in that former time they still talked about "the education of a gentleman," even if as a thing of the past, and they believed that something had come to the gentleman from the study of the literature of Greece and Rome. There were no more gentlemen, there was no more Greek and Latin, but it was thought—or it was shyly hoped—that what had come to the gentleman from his old studies might perhaps be given to the democratic man in the process of his new kind of education. This was the chief rationale of the required course in English literature in American colleges.

Behind this idea there was surely Matthew Arnold's "The Study of Poetry" and all that Arnold had said about culture—Arnold's influence on American collegiate education cannot be overestimated. But if you are going to set intellectual and spiritual store by the influence of "the best that has been thought and said in the world," it eventually becomes a question whether you are exerting a very great influence by asking a student to consider the charm of Waller's "Go, lovely rose," or, not to prejudice the case, the perfection and power of Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress." That is to say, it became a question whether a great deal of the most delightful and cherished part of English literature had any bearing on intellectual and spiritual training as it can be conceived by makers of curriculums.

This question and the answer given to it, and similar questions and answers, led eventually to a most important event in our collegiate education. In 1937 Columbia College instituted the required course for Freshmen that was called Humanities A. The rationale of this course was very simple and quite right. It held that it was absurd to suppose that a man was educated at all if he had not had the experience of certain very great books in all literatures. This view of education had been introduced to the College by John Erskine just after the first World War and had been partly realised in the General Honours course for selected juniors and seniors. Erskine's idea had to make its way against formidable opposition, but it did make its way and it eventually established itself in the freshman Humanities course.

Now, when you come to make a list of the very great names in literature from Homer to Goethe—Goethe was at first the outer limit of the list, although now it is Dostoievsky—and you feel that, in the nature of the case, you *must* include two Greek historians, two Greek and several later philosophers, and four Greek dramatists, there are only a very few English writers who can advance an unquestionable claim to a place on the list. Shakespeare does, of course. So does Milton. But Chaucer's claim comes to seem questionable. The list is not a wholly fixed canon, it changes a little from year to year, and Chaucer was once included. But coming as he did after St. Augustine and Dante, he was thought by the teachers of the course to be rather local, even insular. Fielding was for some years on the list—there was still some force to the opinion which prevailed when I was in college that *Tom Jones* is one of the very greatest of novels. But this opinion has lost what force it had twenty years ago—at the moment it isn't a very lively opinion in many people's minds that Fielding is a great novelist at all: in our age of criticism I can think of but a single critical essay that has been devoted to *Tom Jones*.* Indeed, nothing could indicate better the tendency of feeling about English literature than the decline of the reputation of Fielding, whose charm for many readers had surely been that he was so very *English* an English writer. Eventually *he* vanished from the list. Swift, with *Gulliver's Travels*, was on it from the first and he has held his place through thick and thin.

So there is our list of the most important writers of the West, and it includes of English writers only Shakespeare, Milton, and Swift. I was a member of the first in-

* I had in mind Ronald Crane's essay. But now comes William Empson with his own essay on *Tom Jones* and with mention of Middleton Murry's.

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structorial staff of the Humanities course and I can recall my feelings about the smallness of the English representation: I was glad of it. I was delighted by the range and sweep of what was before me. It made all of English literature seem rather confined, rather local. If one *had* to teach freshmen, what a relief it was to discuss the great resounding ideas of the ages, the nature and origin of evil, the nature of fate, the relation of the individual to the state, the nature of sovereignty, the wonderful sin of *hubris*, without which, apparently, there would be no literature at all and no history. For it is inevitably ideas that are discussed in the Humanities A classroom, great, bold, primitive, basic ideas. And this makes, I believe, a very good subject matter for young men of eighteen—I thought then, and still think, that it makes the best subject matter.

The Humanities course of Columbia College has had, as you know, a very considerable influence. Using it as a model, but departing from it in small ways and in large ways, many colleges have devised courses which undertake to acquaint the student with the range of world literature. With that phrase, "world literature," which is now part of the argot of our collegiate education, there enters yet another rival of English literature. The Columbia College Humanities course was not conceived of as a course in world literature. Rather, it was a course in the literary and intellectual tradition of the West, what is called the Judaic-Hellenic-Christian tradition. But surely, a good many teachers asked, this is a questionable, an *artificial* limitation? Events, they said, are forcing upon us a larger view of culture than this, a global view of culture. Events are bringing into question the preponderating importance of the Judaic-Hellenic-Christian tradition. For a time, we of the West have dominated the world. But we know that we can no longer dominate it, ought no longer dominate it, should never have dominated it. We thought we could teach and lead others: we have sinned the sin of pride. Now we must listen to new voices too long unheard. There is the voice of China, there is the voice of India, and very likely a good many others when we come to look for them. If we listen to these voices, then the voices of the Judaic-Hellenic-Christian tradition become but one in a great chorus. And of course any one national, temporal part of that voice comes to seem small and thin indeed, let alone any personal part of it. Can we spend our students' time on Keats when all the Upanishads wait?

One more circumstance, the last I shall mention, helps to explain the decline of the study of English literature. This is the nature of *modern* literature, its very engaging and formidable nature.

First as to its engagingness. I have but to mention the names of the writers who have dominated the literary scene during the last quarter of a century to lead you to accept my statement, extreme as it is, that there has never been a literary constellation which has received so intense, so passionate, so concentrated, and so intellectual an attention. Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Lawrence, Proust, Mann, Gide, Kafka, Faulkner: this is to select only those who make the most obvious display of power. Each one of them evokes from his admirers a passionate intensity which has in it an element of theological fervour. This is understandable and even appropriate—for it is impossible to comprehend these writers without perceiving that they all express a sense of crisis, a belief that man is at some turning point of his fate. No other constellation of writers that I can think of has ever so fully involved the moral life of their readers. The idea expressed in 1925 by Ortega y Gasset that modern literature was taking a direction away from the "human" is perfectly absurd: what earlier group of writers has ever been so extreme and so overt in its concern with the human situation or has had so human, so personal, a response?

Can we be surprised if students—especially those of the kind we like most, those with sensitivities tuned to the world around them, with the impulse to see some connection between their formal education and their spiritual fate—should find the study of these

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writers of special importance to them? Can we even be surprised if these students should be incredulous and a little impatient when we tell them that the poets of the English Romantic movement have much of the apocalyptic quality of the modern writers that so engage them, and that at least they are remarkably relevant to the modern writers? Or if these students, having time to take a course either in the modern writers or in the Romantic poets, but not in both, should choose the former?

So much for the engagingness of the modern writers which works to draw off our students' interest from the old tradition of English literature. A word now about what I have called their formidableness—their difficulty. This we all recognise, and the effect of our recognition has been to suggest to us the difficulty of all literature and to bring about the great proliferation of critical theory and practice in the interests of interpretation. At the present moment there is a reaction against the large critical movement of the last two decades, especially against that kind of criticism which assumes that every literary work presents a difficulty: in its extreme forms it is said to assume that every literary work is a *problem* or a *puzzle*, or, as T. S. Eliot has put it, a lemon to be squeezed until the juice of meaning runs. I have no wish to get involved in the issue of this reaction. I am aware that modern critical practice has sometimes gone to extravagant lengths in interpretation, yet I find that there really is a good deal of difficulty to be encountered in literature, often where it is least suspected, and it seems to me to be profitable and interesting to press harder upon a work of literature than my temperament naturally inclines me to. In short, I am concerned neither to attack nor to defend the modern criticism, but only to remark that it is a literary discipline which inevitably engages a considerable part of a student's or teacher's time and curiosity, and that it is in effect yet another competitor with English studies as they used to be understood.

And this is not to mention that the more or less newly developed concern with criticism and *method* has been institutionalised in elementary courses which undertake to teach the college student how to read and understand literature—and of course not English literature only, or chiefly, but any literature that might come his way, and of course, since a method is involved, with an emphasis upon the method and the single isolated work rather than upon the breadth and catholicity of reading which once was assumed to be the goal of the study of English literature.

II

I HAVE given what I think are the chief reasons why the literature of England no longer holds its old pre-eminence in our minds and our curriculums, and why, as time goes on, it will probably be assigned an even smaller place. To take note of this phenomenon is to commemorate a significant moment in the history of the American imagination. It is the moment when Americans conceive of themselves to be living in a fully-developed culture, which is to be described in its own positive terms, not merely by negative comparison with other cultures, which has its own history, its own laws of development, its own tone and quality, its own destiny.

But, as I said at the beginning, we lose something when English literature retires from its central place in our humanistic study. What is it that we lose?

It seems to me that it is exactly at the moment when we conceive American culture to be fully developed that we most need the awareness of what, on another occasion, I spoke of as *the other culture*. The occasion was an address on Sigmund Freud, and in trying to account for Freud's courage, for his personal integrity and his ability to withstand the disadvantages of his early circumstances in Vienna, I cited, among other things that helped him, a certain element of his education. It was an old-fashioned classical education and it enforced upon the boy, as I said, "the image of *the other culture*, that wonderful imagined culture of the ancient world which no one but schoolboys, school-

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masters, scholars, and poets believed in." And I went on to speak of Freud's mastery of English and of English literature and his early love of England: he loved England for the same reason that generous spirits have loved Greece—that is, for moral reasons: England was for him the land that licensed the wonderful multiplicity of Shakespeare, the land of Milton (who was Freud's favourite English poet) and of Cromwell, the land that would not brook tyranny.

Now I do not think that in our modern situation the culture of Greece can have for us the high moral sanction it once had for Europe. Nor can the culture of England mean to a student in America in the 20th century what it meant to Freud in Vienna in the nineteenth. Yet the lively and informed awareness of another culture is still of very great importance in education.

This importance is in the first instance intellectual. Nothing is of greater value in the training of the mind than the exercise of the ability to imagine life as it was lived in distant times and distant places. How it was done in *that other place*, how it was said in *that other time*, how it was felt *there* and *then*—this is not merely the historical imagination, it is one of the faculties of developed mind in general. When we undertake to judge the accelerated movement of graduate students away from English literature towards American literature, chiefly American literature of the late period, we may indeed be witnessing an admirable preoccupation with the native tradition and with present circumstances, but we may also be witnessing a failure of the imagination which is fatal to the student of literature. Having myself for some years given the graduate course at Columbia in the later period of American literature, I cannot help seeing a continuity between most students' interest in American literature and those theories of secondary education which insist that the student cannot possibly understand a work of literature that does not relate to his own experience, that to ask him to reach beyond that experience is to offer him an affront that cannot be tolerated in a democracy. If we consider it as it manifests itself in the secondary schools, the trend away from English literature—it is almost completed—is a form of anti-intellectualism. There is no doubt much to be charged against the old curriculum—in its conception and in its teaching there was probably a considerable infusion of mere gentility. And I suppose it has the political disadvantage, in a nation whose ethnic origins are so various, of seeming to suggest that one ethnic group, by reason of our special interest in the culture associated with it, is superior to all others. And of course the secondary school situation is far more complex and difficult than it used to be. Yet the New York high school I attended drew its students chiefly from the sons of immigrant families, and to these boys those genteel teachers of ours taught Burke's Speech on Conciliation, and Hazlitt, Lamb, De Quincey, and Macaulay, and *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and a good deal more. They taught with authority—Mr. Walter Johnson's lessons in Milton's minor poems are the basis of everything I may now know about poetry—and they would have said that exactly *because* the texts were beyond the experience of the boys it was necessary for the boys to master them. I look back at the experience as being of the very essence of democracy.

AT THIS point the proponents of the Humanities and of World Literature will ask whether their programmes do not make occasion for just that exercise of the imagination beyond immediate experience that I have spoken of. Yes, in some degree they do. But, as I have said, the Humanities course deals chiefly with ideas; it cannot do otherwise. This is a good beginning but it can only be a beginning in the process of developing the historical or cultural imagination. As for the World Literature courses, in their implied rejection of the especial value of the cultures that lie nearest to us and that are traditional with us, in their affirmation of the equal value of *all* cultures, there is an implied denial of the actuality, of the force and value, of *any* culture.

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Then too we must be aware of the deficiencies of literary study that is carried on chiefly through translation. I should be the last person in the world to take a high or a pure position about reading in translation. And yet it is true that literary study, if it is to fulfil its implied promises, must sooner or later be the study of language. It is true even though we who teach have not yet devised ways of talking about language that will seem substantive and not trivial to students who are not, or not yet, adepts in literature. And if it is true, then the study of literature in translation only, or chiefly, must always be incomplete or inadequate. Since there is but little hope that the literature of any foreign language can be widely studied in America in its own language, then the literature of our own language must always have the first place in our course of literary study.

At this point the members of the American Civilisation courses abate their antagonism to my discourse. The literature of our own language!—how right I have suddenly become. And how bright in their demonstration shine the broad new fields of American Studies!

They do indeed, they shine very bright. But I am by no means sure that they are the pastures to which our steps should tend in undergraduate education.

In some ways the study of American literature does indeed recommend itself as an educative subject as compared with the study of World Literature. For American literature can be studied systematically, as World Literature, being so very big, cannot. It offers us the opportunity to look at a whole literature seen as an entity, with its history, its development, the complete interrelation of its parts. Maybe you will say that this is not a virtue—I know, of course, that there is a strong body of opinion that stands against the systematic and historical study of literature, representing it as non-literary, a mere contrivance of the academy. But we must not let ourselves be hustled into a condemnation of the systematic and historical study of literature. It is not a mere modern academic invention. The arts have always been known systematically and, in so far as possible, historically—this is the way the painter knows painting, the musician music, the poet poetry.

But, you will ask, why not the systematic study of American literature? The answer can be quite simple: because American literature is not sufficiently extensive in its history. Thus, when we consider the study of language, we must see it as a clear disadvantage that American literature has no Chaucer. When we consider the study of prosody, it is a clear disadvantage that we have no Wyatt, that the study of American prosody begins with Walt Whitman. A deficiency appears again when we come to study the relation of literature to institutions and the general culture—America, alas, has no 17th century, and for the systematic study of literature a 17th century is indispensable. And when we come to the study of the relation of literature to ideas we are in a similar plight. Consider what may be done with the relation of English literature to that great general European event which we call the French Revolution—there is scarcely a work of literature for sixty and more years after it that cannot be shown to be in one way or another a response to this event. Compare this with the relation of our literature to the most dramatic event of our history, the Civil War, by which, as you will suppose, I mean not only the physical event but the ideas which the event expressed. It is a striking fact of our culture that the involvement of our literature with the Civil War is slight indeed.*

I BELIEVE that I have a very clear sense of how difficult and complex American literature is. And difficulty and complexity constitute an invitation to systematic study. But the difficulty and complexity of American literature are, I believe, of a special kind,

*I ventured to say this before I had read the summary of the lecture on "The Civil War and American Literature" which Daniel Aaron gave at the celebration of the centenary of Gettysburg College. Professor Aaron substantiates my statement in considerable detail. I, of course, don't mean —nor does Professor Aaron—that the Civil War has not presented itself to the American literary mind as a dramatic and picturesque event.

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and this specialness cannot be understood without reference to a more fully developed national literature. Another way of saying this is that the nature of American literature cannot be understood without reference to English literature.

I am sure that I need not be at pains to protest that nothing I have said is to be taken as in the least a derogation of the quality of American literature, or to imply that the great classics of American literature should not be studied in college. What I am saying is that American literature systematically considered is not the matter that should be the central matter of instruction in literature in our colleges.

I began by saying that in raising the question of what we lose with the diminishing importance, perhaps the disappearance, of English studies I had no practical intention, and I hoped to imply that I had no polemical intention. I have been a *little* polemical but I really could not possibly presume to be practical. Our educational situation is much too thick to permit anyone to be easily prescriptive—there are just too many things of high importance that need to be learned for any educational plan to encompass them. I shall be quite content if in raising my question I have helped to make somewhat clearer the complex actualities of our general cultural situation at the present time.

Ronald Tamplin

To Deny Possession

Two trees could stand
Straight and to their tops
Within the circle of each other's ground.
Their trunks would rise apart, each tree so much
Itself that it could stand alone in such
Completion as to need no more around
It. But they grow together their leaves fanned
And closing with the winds. Yet neither stops
The others growth or takes the rain that drops
To feed it. In their height uninfringed and
Free, in some way crowned,
Some leaves will touch.

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Melvin J. Lasky

An Indian Notebook

Reception

OUT of Greece, where Parthenon and Piraeus were drearily shrouded in the grey wetness of a European spring, and on to hot and humid Bombay Island. At the white-marbled airport I note the weather report which coolly lists the day's temperature as "38 degrees C., 101 degrees F., humidity 89 p.c., normal...." The overnight plunge into the tropics has given me a chill. I confine myself to my hotel room under a slow-moving fan.

Bombay friends come to call on me. They comfort me by telling me how badly I look. One reminds me considerately that Alexander had also come from Greece, and he had died of an Indian fever. It is a bewildering, dispiriting reception. Later I am told that to say "You do not look well" is the most polite, friendly, and solicitous remark that can be made on meeting an acquaintance, and one which should be appreciated by the person addressed with almost a lump in his throat. Choked up with gratitude, I thank my informant and register the first confusing lesson of the journey.

Fair Brides

MISS SINGH is kind enough to invite me to a wedding. It is, alas, not her own, but the seventh in four days (and nights) of one of her friends or relatives. Apparently all the auspices are propitious. The "beneficent planets," among which are Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and the Moon, seem to be in unusually happy combination. Miss Singh assures me that no family would risk the fate and fortune of their children without a most exact calculation of the Zodiac.

I am left with a Mr. Backliwal as Miss Singh joins all the other brilliantly *sari*-ed women under the traditional four-posted garden tent, positively gleaming in the spectrum of Indian silks. He promises to explain all. The ceremony proceeds according to Sikh rites, although neither of the families is of the Sikh faith; it is the nostalgia of urbanised Hindus for ancient ways, and when the old white-bearded priest appears they put a shiny silver microphone before him, and it whistles and hums chaotically like loudspeaker systems the world over. The *tabla* drum, the *vamsi* flute, and the *dvitara* two-stringed lute, the glories of Indian quarter-tone music, begin their booming and twanging rhythms. The guests stand up uncertainly, and are motioned down again by an assistant priest. I whisper to Mr. B., a prosperous local merchant, asking whether his own marriage had been similarly arranged. It had. All the planets had been propitious? They were. No interference from an ascendant Saturn? "None that could be discerned," he said, "but to make sure our astrologer advised a wedding immediately after midnight. Thus I was married shortly before three o'clock in the morning...." Everything, I presumed, has since been going well. "Well, yes, very well.... But in these modern days among our young people, I sometimes suspect that the astrologers are being bribed. Or the heavens are not so beneficent as they were...."

The young groom was of a golden-brown complexion, the girl at his side, by contrast, could almost pass for a light European beauty. These are, evidently, factors of the utmost importance. Colour, I was confounded to learn, is a constant chronic concern of Indian social (and sexual) life. The "fair bride" is the only true prize to be won. Strangely enough, the most striking specimens of Indian womanhood I meet and talk with are mostly from the South, dark-skinned creatures of uncommon beauty, grace, and intelligence. But, says Miss B., under some pressure, and with a tone of bitterness, "we just have to be more witty, more charming...." By and large, barring huge dowries or other ingenious family arrangements, they would seem to be the undesirables of the marriage market. When I press Miss M. as to her real motives for wanting so much to go northwards to Europe,

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she admits, hesitantly, embarrassedly, that she hopes, that she is sure, her skin "would become lighter. . . ."

Am I bewildered? I am. The Indian is outraged by colour-discrimination in Mississippi. The Indian Republic, which historically is a kind of "melting-pot" of Moslems and Persians from the West, Malays from the East, "Indo-Aryans" from the North, and dark Dravidians in the South, stood in Bandung with brown, black, and yellow brethren for progressive racial equality. But orthodox Hindu society itself had been organised around a principle of *Varna* or colour, and its scriptures condemned *Varna-sankara*, the mixing of colours.

And the real tragic difficulty would seem to be that these peoples do not feel well or at ease in their own skin. I am shown matrimonial advertisements which call for "fair brides," and even one asking for a bride of "Jewish complexion." (Wasn't it Herodotus who wrote of some Indians being "white like the Egyptians"?) A Bengali tells me that until recently it was not uncommon to rub apparently fair-looking girls with a wet towel to find out whether their complexion was natural; and some harassed fathers have even tried to give guarantees that their daughters would become "fifty per cent fairer" within three months of marriage.

Worse than Murder

Like a mad dog or an Englishman, into the noon-day sun, and then back to the hotel and into the bar. Never was so small a drink needed so much. But hope was brief and cruelly deceptive. I was never served nor even allowed to remain and stare. Prohibition. This was the "Permit Room," and I had no permit. To-morrow, I promised desperately, I would stand in a long exhausted queue before some steaming government building and obtain the legal concession extended to pleasure-loving foreigners. Then until to-morrow, said the bartender relentlessly. Not another minute in this one available oasis. Parched, pained, unpacified, I turned and left, without even so much as a last backward glance.

"Illegal?" explained Vivek to me at our dry and hopeless dinner. "Worse than that. It is sinful. Or so at least do the present rulers of our land read the injunctions of religion. . . ." Nobody offered consolation, only sober little facts.

"Sinful?" said Nirid. "Worse than that. In Hindu sacred laws the drinking of alcohol is one of the five major sins."

"Murder. . . ." I murmured.

"Worse than that," Nirid pursued implacably. "Among our major sins, murder as such, unless it is the murder of a Brahmin, is not one, whereas even association with a man who drinks is!"

In inexpressible discomfort, now tempered at least by a vague sense of virtue and a high-minded satisfaction that the laws of the land were being properly observed, I listened on with dehydrated curiosity. But no. Apparently there was neither virtue nor law. True, the Supreme Court of India had confirmed the constitutionality of the Prohibition Acts of Bombay and Madras and elsewhere. Thereupon the prices doubled, even of the local pseudo-methylated *arrack*, and poor and rich alike were more intemperate than ever.

"More people drink now," Vivek reports, "and they drink more. A new class has grown up—illicit distillers, profiteers, black-marketeers. Should we not have learned from the boot-legging epoch of America that Prohibition is unenforceable? We did not. Wherever it has been tried it has failed. Of all religions the one that condemns liquor categorically, regarding it like so many of our ministers as the origin of all evil, is Islam—yet even the zeal of the devout Muslims has not led them to such unwisdom. . . .

"Drinkers have always been foreigners," explains Nirid. "Our urban ways have always come from the outside, from the Middle East, from the Mediterranean. Our rural traditions are more truly Aryan, and therefore more in accord with Brahmanic principles. The old Brahmanic sanctions were directed against hateful enemy habits. Against the hated and despised aboriginals and outcasts. Against Muslim and then British conquerors. . . . To-day the enemy is within. Who have the privileged positions? An Anglicised administrative class. Who runs the country?"

Witches

The spectacle of Mardivala, returning for lunch after the morning session of the High Court, drenched and heat-sick in his formal black coat and black tie and stiff, white collar, quite convinces me that civilisation is a form of masochism: it is the price that comfort pays to culture. Naked are the natives, and justice must be wool-clad.

He tells me—as we sit in front of his home-made air-conditioner, a contraption called the "desert-cooler," which is an old-fashioned fan married to a huge cake of ice in a vented tin box—of the case which the judges had just closed with a decision. Six persons, "Adivasi women" belonging to the Warli tribe and dressed in their traditional way, had been charged with the murder of a man, with cooking his flesh in a magical fire and eating it after sharing it with

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the victim's 16-year-old daughter. M., as a lawyer, was a bit sceptical of the charges, but as the State prosecution had it, the six accused were initiating Navshi and Patteri (two minor girls) in the art of witchcraft. Navshi was commanded to offer her father as a sacrifice to please the demoniac deity. On the appointed day (and I summarise from the account of the court record) all the accused and the two girls discarded their clothes; four of the accused, through their magical powers, became pigmies and mounted two canine steeds and went to the place where Navshi's father was sleeping. He was awakened and told that he was to be offered as a sacrifice; as a result of the magic of one of the accused, the victim followed silently. After taking him to a nearby jungle, all the accused women killed the victim, named Vajya, cut him to pieces with scythes and put the flesh into two metal pots. One of the accused waved a magic wand, and fire came out of a fissure in the earth. Vajya's flesh was cooked and devoured, and they all drank liquor.

The key prosecution witnesses were the two girls, Navshi, aged 16, and Patteri, 9, who gave the court the details of the witchcraft ritual. The wife of the victim knew only that her husband had disappeared after having gone to cut grass in a nearby village. The court doctor testified, after examining the bones in the pot, that only the skull and mandible could have been those of a human being. Villagers reported that the six women had long been held to be witches, and that all local deaths due to illness had been attributed to them.

The judge, a Mr. D. G. Gatne, found it all "highly incredible." He dismissed the case, and acquitted the accused. The six women rose, folded their hands, and thanked and blessed the court.

The Chinese Shadow

It is some five years since I visited Eric da Costa in New Delhi at *The Eastern Economist*; I remember his buoyant confidence in the future of the country, darkened only by his preoccupation with the "challenge of China." His thesis was (and remains) that an Asia at the cross-roads could take either of two paths—the Indian or the Chinese, a "middle way" of freedom and social reconstruction, an extreme way of total regimentation. I was elated to find him still so dedicated, still so assured; I was pained to tell him that I thought he must be about the only man in the land who so felt.

"If India falls," Gandhi once said, "Asia dies." But India appears to be afraid of this warning to-day: it fills her with too much self-consciousness, it gives her too burdensome a sense of historic mission. That she should point the way for a whole continent full of struggling peoples? An exaggeration. The challenge of China? Better not talk about that.

So Da Costa alone has this vision of these two slumbering giants, awakening to a modern competition—two ancient but still dynamic civilisations, both of which have in the past given profound original life to philosophical and artistic systems, one in the valley of the Yellow River, the other on the Gangetic Plain. But to whomever else one talks in Nehru's India, the response is only an uncertain laugh ("how romantic you Westerners are about such matters!") or a changing of the subject. I suspect it is not merely due to natural modesty and a weak sense of national adventure; it is, of course, in good part that the contemporary Indian mind, troubled and unsure of itself among the strange new problems of progress, lacks a feeling for its own destiny. The Gandhian mission, supported by an unforgettable generation of passionate spirits, has been fulfilled: India is independent and free. In the Nehru epoch she has continued to remain so, heightened only by a general awareness of modernising change and a very vague impression of self-importance in world-political affairs. Deep conviction, and any large, clear, inspiring vision of the future, is missing. This is also due, I think, to the way in which Pandit Nehru has tried to orient India in international relations. In the atmosphere of a foreign policy which prefers to find in totalitarian neighbours friends of peace and progress, it is very difficult for an Indian to see his way through to the uniqueness and importance of his own democratic experiment. Liberty thrives on the pride in what it uniquely is. To accept "the challenge of China" would be to stress differences and contrasts; this, obviously, would be a gesture of unfriendliness. Neutrality, which is not infrequently a useful instrument of diplomatic machinery, thus becomes a mental and moral outlook, and the very assertion of what one is, and what one can be, is taken to be a dangerous and disagreeable posture.

So it is that my friend Da Costa stands almost alone, and in his isolation has turned to the spinning of fine political myths to make up in personal hope what is lacking on the national scene.

"We in India," he says, with slightly frenetic patriotism, "have always been a tolerant, liberty-loving, and non-violent people."

"And the Chinese?" I ask, half-afraid of what is coming.

"Well, haven't they always been militant, intolerant, authoritarian, regimented by centralising Cæsars, excelling in the arts of mass

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extermination? Think of our whole Indian tradition from Asoka the Great to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi—in essence, it is God-fearing, liberal, and non-violent; politically, decentralised; individually, democratic. And then think of the Chinese tradition, from Shih Huang-ti, the founder of the Chinese Empire, through the last of the Manchus down to Chairman Mao. I find there atrocities and massacres, monolithic patterns, burnings of books. With a single order an Emperor sweeps away regional languages and unifies the writing of the country—and orders all road axles for carts to be of the same size. How true to tradition the Communist revolution in China has run!"

We argue a bit. Certainly India needs the support of a usable past, but not at the price of depriving China of her own. History should be "past politics," not present polemics. It reminds me just a bit too acridly of the hard-hearted readings of the German past in order to strike a blow against Hitler, and even the stone-faced interpretations of Russian history to lengthen the shadow of Stalin through all Slav time. Had Communism come to power on the Gangetic Plain and a free and open society established itself along the Yellow River, we might be hearing lurid tales of Indian cynical violence from Kautilya* to Aurangzeb,† and the civilising mildness of Confucian wisdom.

Ajanta

EN ROUTE to the caves we stop off in the old town which lies about five miles to the south. It is, so says the guide-book, "surrounded by a strong wall and a deep moat...." The wall, dusty and crumbling in the hot sun, looks as if it would be blown away by a mild summer breeze; and the moat is deep, but empty and dry.

On the inside of the old wall, among the open halls of what must once have been a caravanserai, I find a school. There are hundreds of small boys, but only a very few girls. The villagers, I am told, are still very much against co-education. In one hallway there is a small exhibition of children's drawings and paintings, full of perfectly enchanting motifs from the fresco and Mogul styles. In another there is a biology class (or is it only hygiene?), and on the wall there is a painted skeleton, absolutely frightening (to me) in its black-and-white colouration and curious distortions. In foreshortening, perspective, and other artistic techniques there is a primitivism everywhere which is less amusing than inexcusable; in a nearby town (and, as a matter of fact, in many large cities) there is a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in a public square which must have been, I was sure, smaller than life-size!...I also peek into the language-class, and there on the walls in nicely-printed Latin letters (there are tiny Hindi translations below) hang the maxims of their life and their new world—"Knowledge Is Power," "Health Is Wealth," "No Exercise, No Food." But in one corner I also read: "Might Is Right." Somebody must have got his Sanskrit signals crossed.

Along the crescent of the Ajanta caves, excavated in rock on the scarped side of a deep ravine, I look for the stream, and the seven waterfalls, and the picturesque greenery. "Come after the monsoon," Ram advises me, "then it is all there... for the tourists."

In Cave 9, as we paused to examine the little cup-like dugouts in the stone floor (which served the Ajanta artists as palettes), we were joined by a villager. An old man, bare-footed, loin-clad, carelessly turbanned, and none of the attendants bothered to put on any lights for him. He squinted into the darkness, and we went on. In

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* *Kautilya* is a 4th-century (B.C.) Indian contemporary of Aristotle, and if Aristotle was the political adviser to Alexander, Kautilya was the chief theoretician of the Mauryan Empire and prime minister to Chandragupta. Had Alexander's campaign gone further into India, two great theories of politics and power might have had an historic collision. I spent some time hunting down an edition of Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, the ancient manuscript of which was only found in our day; both J. J. Meyer (Leipzig, 1925) and R. Shamasastry (Bangalore, 1915) have made valuable translations from the Sanskrit. In form and in general atmosphere it is strikingly akin to Machiavelli's *Prince*, full of shrewd, cynical, and systematic advice on how to exercise power and maintain an empire. But how utterly cold and cruel it is! It has neither the humanist irony of the great Florentine, nor, of course, the Athenian's classic sense of individual liberty.

† *Aurangzeb* (1659–1707), whose grave I visited in Daulatabad and whose run-down imitation of the Taj Mahal can be seen in Aurangabad (as poetic justice would have it, neither of these are registered in any of my guide-books), was the last of the great Moghuls. He was the descendant of both Timur (Tamerlane) and Genghiz Khan. Fanatical, bigoted, and corrupt, he imprisoned his own father, demolished temples, banned music, and by means of war and hatred destroyed the empire which Babur had founded and Akhbar the Great had so firmly established. Dr. Pannikkar, with the pious generosity of all national-minded historians, writes of Aurangzeb: "He died a broken and defeated man, but he died for an ideal—the unification of India...." I prefer the bizarre but not unintelligent interpretation of a self-educated village chronicler who explained to me that "Aurangzeb is the burnt-ash of the dynasty. He has the madness of decadence. He is Hitler...."

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the twenty-sixth and final cave, we found each other again. He was standing, wide-eyed and entranced, in front of the left wall, before the colossal image of the dead Buddha about to enter Nirvana. This, apparently, was what he had come for. His name is Rup Chand, and he walked twenty miles that day from one of the nearby villages. Did he know anything of the Ajanta caves or of Buddha? He knew nothing. He was a bricklayer. Many of his friends in the village had for years been telling him stories. What kind of stories? The story of a great and powerful man. A giant, in size and in strength. Who might that be? "Bhima," the old man says, "Bhima." This, suggests Ram, is the Hercules-figure of ancient Indian mythology. "A man so large," adds Rup Chand, "that if I were to stand at one end I could not see the other. . . ."

Or so he had been told. Now he was seeing with his own eyes, but sceptically. He moved backwards against the right wall and took in the full view of the reclining Buddha. Then he moved forward again, and with the practical sense of the artisan began to remove his turban in order to measure the true proportions of his not quite so endless Bhima. He counted out in folded lengths the size of the grey tattered cloth he had been wearing around his head. I held one end at Bhima's toes, and Rup Chand stretched his turban out till it reached the giant's navel. Then I stood at the navel with my end, and the measurement was done. Bhima was finite, a little more than two full lengths of the turban. We measured it again, this time going the other way. Rup Chand was almost satisfied. He walked back and forth, and I trotted along with him. Colossal, it was, he said. The largest thing he had ever seen in his life. (My own calculations put it at about twenty-seven feet.) A giant, truly. Bhima himself. But his village friends had not quite told him the truth. From either end, he had reassured himself, he could see the whole.

Real Desires

BEFORE taking leave of Ram this afternoon I mustered enough courage to attack his gentle reserve with a number of personal, and hence exceedingly embarrassing, questions. What a charming companion he has been, and how touching a guide. In Ajanta he would say, "Don't you think these are as important as the frescoes of Assisi, Siena, and Florence?" (and he has never been to Italy, or even, I suspect, seen good photographs). In Ellora he would remark, "And doesn't this remind you of Canova?" (and it didn't, not even remotely). But the "real Ram Krishna," aged 19, born in Secunderabad, salary 60 rupees a month, was a creature very far removed from a brief training in cosmopolitan æsthetic chatter and a short-lived accommodation to gadabout Western curiosity.

He lived in a little room by himself, in a suburb not very far from here, paid seven rupees rent, managed to cook for himself on a food budget of fifteen rupees (goat-meat three times a week), and sent his savings home to his parents. His father was a "butler" in a local hotel, that is to say, one of the "Harijans" (children of God, as Gandhi decided to call the untouchables). Ram's ambition, if one could designate his very tepid life-passion with that burning word, was to go into government service, and he was actually waiting for his appointment to the railways. "Will it be a good job, Ram?" I ask solicitously. It is a wrong question. "How do you mean?" he replies. "That depends entirely on me. Whatever it is I will try to be satisfied. That makes all work easy and satisfactory. I will do my allotted duties." "But it will, after all, give you a little more money." "Oh, yes, I will then have 120 rupees each month." "And that, perhaps, will give you a chance to live a little better—to have a bit of social life . . . to go out with a few girls—possibly to get married some day soon?" "Oh, no," he corrected me, with quiet tolerance. "Oh, no, that will all be done according to Hindu traditions." "But are you that traditional, working and living here all by yourself, away from your family, meeting and talking with foreigners, reading all kinds of strange translated books?" "Well, in some ways I suppose I have changed. I do not subscribe to the Hindu pantheism. I do believe in one god, even if he is invisible. But the girl I will marry will be decided by my parents. They will select a bride for me." "What of their selection? Could you possibly suggest to them a preference?" "How do you mean?" "A girl that you know or have seen and whom you like?" "Oh, I couldn't do that. My parents love me very dearly. More than I deserve." "And when their choice is made, is it possible that you might be happier—or disappointed?" "Oh, I cannot really concern myself with such things."

"And what about those books you were telling me about, all those novels—you certainly have heard about love, and read about it—in those European novels?"

"Oh, I have stayed away from the bad life. Many of my friends in school have turned to the romantic ways. But without me. I have studied."

My discomfort (and perplexity) mounted as my interrogation went awry; but Ram bore with me as with a summer storm. "You see, in my

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life I have no desires. My parents—I am to serve them. I have no other real wishes."

"But then," I ventured, with inexcusable brashness, "unreal wishes?"

"With a little more money I could buy another white shirt, another pair of white slacks, and keep myself a little cleaner. I would look to my dress."

"And to nothing else? A radio for your little room?" "No." "A bicycle to ride into town?" "No." "A small library of your own?" "No," he said again, with no impatient finality, but only that look of sadness and forgiveness, which was in part politeness and in part humility.

"And your son, Ram, your first son—what future for him? Would you wish for him a better life than your own?"

"But how could we tell that? How could we control that? The nature of the boy will determine, whatever our efforts, whether he will be better, in some ways, than I, or worse, in other ways. Is that not a principle of life?"

Unreal Desires

BACK from the villages, cramped and medieval, into the bustling metropolis of Bombay, with the endless lights of the Marine Road Drive glittering along the bay. The transition is violent and puzzling. Bakul picks me up to take me to a "typical party," typical that is for India's unique cosmopolitan centre. It is a *chic* affair, and for a moment I felt myself in Paris or New York, except for the fact that the women were more beautiful, the men wittier, the whole atmosphere gayer and more informal. The host is a wealthy Sikh who publishes a new art magazine. Jim B. is a film-maker who has just won a national prize for a Burmah-Shell documentary. K. is a pilot with Air-India. Mrs. P. is a divorcée who now works in an advertising agency and dreams of going to America. Mulk Raj Anand is the distinguished novelist, wears achkan and jodhpurs, and longs for the youthful years when everybody ("even your European friends," he says to me sharply) was loyal to pure revolutionary ideals. K.K.T. is a Parsi merchant who has just returned from North-German ports where he has bought two freight-ships. Good London gin (bought on the anti-prohibitionist black-market) flows too easily. I remember now only sitting in the corner with Moti Lal, my hastily-appointed *guru* for the evening, pressing for information and enlightenment. I look at Mrs. P., so darkly beautiful in a charcoal-brown sari, who seems so flirtatious. "To yield to spontaneous emotion," I hear Moti Lal saying, "or to sensual appetite is felt to be wrong." Here too? I asked, here too? "This is especially the case with sexual satisfaction. Somehow it is always felt to be illicit and somehow impious." My confusion is only matched by my disappointment. But Moti Lal is relentless. "And the most scandalous conduct of all would be for a man and a woman to exchange smiling glances in public." I turn away from further enlightenment, avoid the path of the lovely Mrs. P., and become very depressed when Patwin announces, in a drunken drawl, that the black-market gin is all gone.

One in Seven

MODERN demographers, like the demoniac witch-doctors of old, speak a curse. At the end of the second Five-Year Plan alone (1961) there will be 25 million more to provide for; by 1976 at least 100 million more. Is the problem being faced? (But then: are problems anywhere ever really faced?) In some of the book-stores I see old copies of Marie Stopes prominently displayed. In many of the villages there are odd tales of the coming of contraception. Among a few experts there is talk of the legalisation of abortion. Meanwhile, according to something called "a pilot research monograph in family planning," I learn that in the Lucknow area "total fertility comes to 6·015 children per mother, with a gross reproduction rate of 2·379." Among the other indelicate conclusions: (1) unless fertility is so reduced as to limit the average number of children to three, the present rate of population growth cannot be stemmed; (2) only one in six of the mothers of child-bearing age are responding positively to "family planning"; (3) no suitable method is yet available that "may generally be accepted and be easily adopted by the women."

But in this morning's newspaper I read that Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon, the new Defence Minister, with the sensitivity which all army leaders have for raw material, says that "the people is our country's greatest wealth," and that "India is the second greatest country in the world because she has the second largest population in the world."

Size continues to exert a peculiar fascination in Indian minds. Even Minoo Masani, that cool, calculating intelligence, writes in the very opening lines of his *Our India* (a best-selling book for the young, which I pinched from his library last night)—"One man in every seven is an Indian. The other six are, let's say, an American, a European, a Negro, an Arab, a Russian, and a Chinese.... Doesn't that make you feel very important?"

I asked A. D. Gorwala—who has written so bitterly on "the disease of surplus population" and other problems that hardly a publication in the country dares print him any more—for some guidance in the moral and medical complexities.

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The religious Hindu believes that continence and abstinence are the only tolerable approaches. The socialist is convinced that population control is only a capitalist fetish; and in as much as full employment will guarantee work and livelihood for all, the more the merrier. The statistician comforts himself with the fact that India's rate of increase is lower than that of Japan or the United States or Canada, and far lower than that of South American countries. The patriot, distressed at the lack of Indian achievement in so many spheres, finds consolation in the thought of the enormous population. The traditionalist would leave the problem to the usual checks: pestilence, war, and famine.

So, says Gorwala, "our life will generally continue to be, if not short, still nasty and brutish—unless we recognise that biology is our priority. It is the key to India's economic welfare and to our political stability. What we need is a vigorous, large-scale, country-wide propaganda and action programme. The birth-rate can and must be brought down...."

Gorwala's eloquence is convincing. But when he begins to go into the surgical details of his plan for the sterilisation of men with three children or more, I find myself making a move to change the subject.

Krishna Menon

WHAT manner of man is V. K. Krishna Menon? Last week he was asked for his opinion on India's thorny language question, and he replied testily that he had none, for "I speak no Indian language." An irascibly gauche reply in public for a man whose political ambition has carried him into the cabinet and into Nehru's favoured circle. Yesterday in Travancore he was pressed with the issue of the mounting opposition to the Communist government in Kerala—and he answered by saying that it would be "beneath the dignity" of the Congress party to ally itself with the other dissidents (and this at a moment when the Communists maintain a majority by only one seat!). What is he up to? Purshottom, relentless pessimist that he is, thinks only the worst. "The die is cast. Menon will succeed Nehru. And that is the end of our free India." Almost everybody sees him as the witch-doctor, the dark medicine-man of Indian politics. He is respected with reluctance, and feared irrationally. "You will never understand his power," says Shankar, "unless you understand his relationship with Panditji, and that I am afraid is lost in the thousand-year-old loving-hating tensions between fair North-Indian Brahmins and black South-Indian warrior castes...." Everybody has a different theory.

So the speculations of the day went. I asked A. R., the *New York Times* correspondent, and he too psychologised. "With Menon," he says, "there is always a strange drive to get the insult in first. I have often wondered where it comes from. Perhaps from his colour sensitivity. Or his loneliness. Or his poverty, or his insecurity...." Frank Moraes suggests that "he combines a masculine mind with a feminine spirit, much given to tantrums and exhibitions of pique, verbal volubility and the tired airs and graces of a peevish prima donna...." "You know," he adds, "like John Foster Dulles, Menon delights in playing the combined rôles of matador and bull. When in America I was asked my opinion of the man I always used to say placidly, 'Krishna Menon is *our* Mr. Dulles.'"

Ushered into his Ministry of Defence office this afternoon, I paused under a huge portrait of Gandhi as three colonels were escorted out. Menon was polite, patient, and cool. (This evening I happened to learn at dinner from a woman who had lunch with him that he had been plying her with questions as to "who" I was, and I shudder to think of the astrological coincidence of my puzzling over his inmost soul while he was sketching a psychograph of me, probably based, alas, on the evening paper's interview which listed me most strangely as "a Berliner who edits a German magazine, sports a French beard, and speaks fluent English but with a strong American accent.")

"You must understand the tragic complication of our Indian task. You in the West first had your industrial revolution, and then came modern politics. Here we first had to have our political revolution, and now comes modern economics. You first had wealth, then power. We have power, and have to create wealth.... And how full of ironies and surprises it all is! I flew recently along our North-Eastern frontier areas. There I landed to visit one of the local tribes. This was a people who had never seen a wheel until my plane rolled to a stop on one of their fields."

We chatted, not unamiably, for half an hour, and the difficult issues were sedulously avoided. His was a brief performance, a one-acter intended only to exhibit a bit of charm, wit, and intelligence. "After all, you are seeing the Prime Minister to-morrow, aren't you?...Oh, he's a pregnant thinker! He is the real man of thought.... I? Oh, I'm not an intellectual, I'm not a thinker. Or even an educated person. I don't read any books. I'm just a——" And here he made an elegantly nervous gesture with his hand and angular fingers, not without some of the South Indian grace which Kathakali dancers have made famous.

In jesting clumsy imitation I waved my own

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hand, and begged him to say exactly what that might be....

"Oh," he said, "just an ... aimless ... flutterer...."

Then I left, and this time there were two generals standing under the oil of Gandhi as I was escorted out.

Faceless Modern

NEW offices, new apartments, new ministries —"faceless modern" is the way we build. Is the world becoming like every place? It is. Certainly the furious despair of the Indian architects I meet is familiar. "What is all this going up?" Rajendra fumes, flailing his arms as if to sweep away all the scaffolding on the horizon. "An indigenous modern architecture? Nothing but empty-minded translations of jazz. Everywhere just another mass of brick and concrete, with holes punctured to breathe in and out. Doesn't anybody realise what horrors we are going to leave behind as the landmarks of our times? Aren't these the slums of our soul?"

Mansinh Rana complains—for me, not quite convincingly—against the middle way, with a bit of "old sentimental remembrances" and a bit of the new "international style of living" in boxes-on-stilts. Some of the new structures I see seem to me a happier departure from the Gropius norm than the timid heresies which Western architects are uncertainly allowing themselves these days. Still, no one anywhere appears to know what modern truly is, and how, if at all, the sentimental glories of the past should fit into a present full of continuous cantilevers and reinforced concrete. In Athens I found an absurd taste for brand new Corinthian columns, and here, in New Delhi, there is likely to be a mindless return to the ornamental roundness of Indo-Saracen epochs.

I have yet to hear a good work spoken for even a scrap of marble or red sandstone going up. The capital full of bureaucrats and bo-trees is contemptuously dismissed as "Washington (or Bonn) in the Punjab," in the style of (according to one disagreeable local wag) "Victorian-Wrighteousness." As for Le Corbusier's Chandigarh, a hundred miles or so north of here—this is Vighneswara's report:

"What is it other than miles of asphalted road dumped on the flat, arid country? Can anything grow there? I saw an avenue of our *kalyana-murungai*, and they were putting up a brave fight against the pitiless sun. Didn't M. Le Corbusier know that these are extremely fragile trees? ... And that new city. Everything is meticulously numbered. All the public buildings have enigmatic exteriors. And the long ribbons of elongated flats were for me a nightmare of asymmetrical geometry. In the High Court there are Picassoesque interiors which I presume are supposed to strike terror into the hearts of malefactors. I felt only claustrophobia, without a single ray of natural light."

I concede the grotesquerie, but stubbornly insist on a sign that we know not merely what we are against, but what we are for.

"The idea of conjuring up a whole city out of the void is impious!" Apparently it trespasses on "Brahma's exclusive right," but where would Brahma build to-day, and how?

"Our cities were always built, or rather imperceptibly grew, from a central nucleus, a temple or a palace." It seemed hardly likely that the Planning Commission would provide such convenient new points of urban departure.

We finally compromise on an agreement that it was folly to spend millions for Le Corbusier's Chandigarh when hardly 40 miles away there was Patiala, admirably suited for development.

"I tell you, such a folly would be inconceivable anywhere except in the snob's paradise which is modern India!"

I let that pass, without sad Western qualifications. I was afraid we might have to have another drink (read: lemon squash) in the enormous and empty halls, bars, and lobbies of the new Asoka Hotel, a shiny, massive, frightening void, India's very own contribution to the architectural disease of white elephantiasis....

M.P.s and Coolies

I SPEND the morning in the *Lok Sabha*; until recently it was still known as "The House of the People" and it still looks, as an Indian Parliament inevitably must, like a vaguely Saracen version of Westminster. But the chamber is quite peaceful. Pandit-ji, as Nehru is called with some affection, is seated in the first seat, first row, to the left of the speaker, and he wears, as do a hundred other followers (curiously, even indoors), the little white cap which Gandhi-ji made famous. There is an attractive sprinkling of women M.P.s. When Nehru rises to speak there appears to be no sudden sense of excitement; in addition to being Prime Minister he is also Director of Planning and Minister of Atomic Energy and it is only another departmental report that has to be given. A not-very-bright back-bencher interrupts to put a foolish and interminably eloquent question about isotopes. The Prime Minister, with a weariness which seeps through his formal cloak of parliamentary patience, replies with the necessary facts and figures about the construction of piles and reactors.... All in all, a dull, routine, and hence, as democracies go these days, not unimpressive session.

In the afternoon, I wandered through the halls

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of the government buildings, and was embarrassed to cause so much unrest, for at each turn a host of squatters rises and remains standing until one passes. These are supposed to be known by their new official appellation, namely, "Grade IV Employees," but everywhere when some small thing is needed the cry goes up, as in the days of the British Raj, for *"Bearer."* Strange. I would have supposed that these words of humiliation, these vestiges of "imperialist command" and native indignity, would have been mouth-washed out of the language in the new India. But they seem to be on more lips than ever before. In the railway station, as the train comes in and porters are in demand, I hear the shouting on all sides for *"Coolie!"*

A Mixed Marriage

ABDUL K. M. was a foreign medical student at the university when I knew him twenty years ago; he has since become a brilliant young Muslim surgeon in Agra. He still appears to be something of a stranger in his own country, and it is with the warmhearted, unnatural frankness of two strangers that we come to speak of personal things.

He tells me of his friendship with a young assistant in the hospital. She is the daughter of one of India's most distinguished doctors, a Hindu. For six years they were in love, but dared not to marry. ("Mixed marriages," as everybody has been politely telling me, are more frequent these days.) Two years ago they decided to make their own arrangements. Since then his wife has been cut off from her family: her father never speaks of her, her mother obediently refrains from writing. They both have lost all contact with their old circle of friends. His own appointment to a university was cancelled; his contract with his clinic was not renewed. "Oh, there was nothing personal in all this," he explains, "it was simply the formal proper sign of respect to my distinguished father-in-law, a fine and honourable man whom nobody wanted to hurt further.... But I did receive one personal congratulation. How elated we were! A famous colleague went out of his way to befriend us. But then I learned that he was a lower-caste man.... The difference? The difference is that he had become eminent through achievement, and he knew the pain of being an outsider. His gesture, you see, was a private, a personal matter. It was pity, and self-pity. It was not a matter of principle...."

So there they were again in their utter loneliness which I, even more of an outsider, even more irrelevantly personal, was quite helpless to relieve.

On Time

I ONLY noticed this morning, with an accidental passing glance at the little note from the Prime Minister's Secretariat, that what I took to be the official correspondence number—*Chaitra 19, 1880*—was something quite different. On to-day's copy of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" I am struck, too, that next to the usual newspaper dateline (April 13, 1958) there is also the following: *Chaitra 30, 1364 B.C.* (*Chaitra 23, 1880 Sakabda*). The calendar? Then never was a subscriber so reassured that the copy in his hand was the very latest.

Apparently, as Colonel S. says, with that weary resignation which I often confound with the heritage of British understatement, "there is a great deal of confusion at present prevailing in regard to the calendar." For some seven centuries under Muslim rule India had used the lunar Hejira calendar—except for the brief period when Emperor Akbar had insisted on the Tarikh Ilahi, the Iranian solar calendar. When the British came (1757), the Gregorian calendar was introduced. That, according to my calculations, should make three—but no, there are, with the usual Indian talent for proliferation, at least thirty. I am shown a bewildering variety of *panchangs*, and in each of these almanacs the holidays and religious festivals are differently listed, some differing between Bengal and Orissa by as much as a month. Which is, I suppose, only normal, considering that the calculations were made by indigenous astronomers who did their moon-gazing with the naked eye. Nor did the local scribes fail to introduce deviations of their own. Colonel S. does some rapid researches on the date 21 March, 1957. In Bengal this is Chaitra 7, in Orissa Chaitra 8, and in the South (where everything is always different) Panguni (Phalguna) 8. Small wonder that some of our friends have reputations for coming, not minutes or hours but days and even weeks late for appointments!

How can all this confusion be resolved? By committee, obviously. But the governmental committee must limit itself only to "secular" reforms, which would leave the chaos of religious holidays intact. This is a little embarrassing, for even the Catholics on detecting that the Julian calendar was miscalculating the equinoxes, corrected it in the year 1582, on the advice of Pope Gregory XIII. India kept on losing as much as 23 minutes a year for some 14 centuries. The accumulated error makes March 21, or the vernal equinox, fall on April 13 or 14.

From the name of the astrologer caste, the Sakadvipi Brahmins, comes the chosen "Saka era," which still runs some 78 years behind the Christian era. The day, so the committee has

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ruled, should be reckoned from midnight to midnight—except, of course, for religious purposes, and there the local sunrise systems may be followed. The All-India Radio now opens each broadcast with both the Gregorian and the new Indian dates.

Colonel S. tells me that Nehru, too, had once asked about the Saka calendar. "He didn't understand it either."

Nehru

My plans for Agra and Fatehpur Sikri are upset by the news that Pandit Nehru would see me that evening, and I rush about foolishly, taking a frantic quick glance at everything and, of course, a snap-shot of the Taj Mahal. The plane brought me back in time for tea at the Prime Minister's residence.

He asked me whether I had seen the *Moti Masjid* in the Red Fort of Agra, but I am afraid I hadn't. Or the inscription, attributed to Jesus, on the *Buland Darwaza* in Fatehpur Sikri—"The world is a bridge, Pass over it, But build no house upon it, The world endures but an hour . . ."—but I must have passed it by with so many other Sanskrit carvings. But one thing I had seen, I said (with a shade too much enthusiasm, as if to cover up my tourist shame and embarrassment), a house worth building, a unique and enduring thing of the human spirit. I meant the *Diwan-i-Khas* (and it had, in fact, preoccupied me in the royal, long-deserted city of the Great Moghuls). He did not seem to recall it. This was, I reminded him, "the hall of the private audience." It is centred remarkably on a single pillar, half of which is carved in Hindu and the other half in Moslem designs. Crowning the pillar was the Emperor Akhbar's seat, and radiating out were four causeways to the four corners of the gallery, and there sat each of the ministers. So, apparently, did Akhbar engage in disputations. Here, I thought, caught in curved and cornered sandstone, was the perfect image of political power in the context of a free dialogue. Whereupon he did me one better (and how easily, and with what appeared to be genuine scholarship), and told me of the rock-engraved proclamations of the Emperor Asoka which are still being discovered by the archæologists. Asoka had been stricken with remorse (two thousand years ago, but not irrelevant) at the useless carnage of his victorious wars against enemies, and announced his repentance in a series of pronouncements. From the various Rock Edicts now dug up there still breathes, Nehru felt, the spirit of peace, good-will, and compassion in the world. . . .

Which brought us to the frontiers of the cold war. When I gave him a copy of my book on the Hungarian revolution, he seemed to strike an apologetic note about India's slow and inaccurate comprehension of events (it took a month to reverse Menon's, and his own, wild misreading of Budapest). He asked about the apparently conciliatory Soviet moves on the questions of European disengagement and atomic bombs. I could only tell him what I had from two former Ambassadors in Moscow, namely, that they (Messrs. Kennan and Bohlen) waited expressly for years for one small, serious, substantial sign that the Bolsheviks wanted to settle some open problem with the Americans—in vain. For my own part, no creditable Soviet initiative could be expected from May Day speeches or slogans on the front page of *Pravda*. "But then," he countered, "is Mr. Dulles the model of diplomacy by 'small signs'? . . . I know there are times when even the men in Moscow look out towards the West for a signal which could break the deadlock. Khrushchev himself spoke of this with me, even asked me to help. I reminded him that so much of what he has been saying would only serve to reinforce the recalcitrance of the other side. . . . But the hardness and blindness is, I am afraid, mutual. Abuse and recrimination is the meaning of the Cold War."

I was eager to talk about Indian affairs, and he was relaxed enough to take a thoughtful backward glance at the path the nation had taken in ten years. The deal with the Maharajahs to establish national unity still seemed to him a defensible expedient, although, as he added, "sometimes I think we were much too generous" (for the compensations to the princes were often almost as fabulous as the bejewelled empires surrendered). The killings of the Pakistan Partition period were "awful" and still horrified and shamed him. He felt pleased about the breakthrough in India of new science and technology. He felt happy about the new type of "community villages" being fostered throughout the countryside. He thought that the several general elections the new Indian democracy had experienced were surprising achievements. He remained amazed at how the "Personal Law" which he had helped to draft had actually revolutionised the status of women (how it had made divorce possible, given them property titles and right of inheritance, etc.).

And what, in the present, filled him "with despair"? Here he began to speak with a frown, nervously, and even the fading rose on his jacket suddenly looked utterly wilted. Issues become smaller and spirits become weaker. He deplored "the new provincialism" in the land, especially the controversy (and occasional violent outbursts) over the linguistic issue. He was saddened by the return of the caste problem, "which has been

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going out socially, but is now coming back politically" (for all parties manœuvre cynically for the caste-man's vote). His explanation was that "in the absence of external danger a people always multiplies the divisions within itself. . . ."

"Does Pandit-ji really look so tired, so weary?" How can one tell across a tea-table? A night's sleep, or a fortnight's holiday, might restore a bit of bounce. Would it touch the deeper fatigue? When I spoke of Berlin, Nehru recalled that he had been there twice, once in the 'twenties, but before that in the pre-World War I period with vivid memories of the Kaiser's pageantry, Wilhelm's moustaches, and all that; I was forcibly reminded that he quite possibly belonged to that aged generation whose last political adventure always seems these days to be retirement.

In the evening, in exchange for odd scraps of the above, A.R., of the *Times* offers me his theory of Nehru's celebrated fatigue. "This man is the leader of the government," he says, "the leader of the majority party, the one force in Parliament, the chief economic planner, the chief social-reformer, the leading military thinker, the foreign affairs analyst, the man who decides everything." More than that: "He is everywhere. . . . Here he is scolding the police, ridiculing superstition, censoring movies, inspecting schools, peering down construction shafts. He once told me that to him India was a crowd, that in the past nine years he had never visited a shop in New Delhi, taken a quiet walk in the streets, ridden in a taxi. The weariness is the burden of devotion. . . ."

"That is too physiological," comments P., "and not ideological enough. Pandit-ji is faced with the most disagreeable, the most unattractive political battle of his life—fighting the Communists. This is the campaign which will make or break Indian democracy. He knows it. He will even acknowledge it privately. He may conscript himself for the battle, but he will never enjoy it. Weariness is often only a symptom of spiritual reluctance."

My own suggestion was less inspired, more bureaucratic. These days have been full of governmental appointments. I have gone in and out of ministries and secretariats. The men around Nehru? Think of the men around Gandhi! The Mahatma was able to develop and to hold strong and keen-witted personalities around him. There was the intellectual fox-like Rajagopolachari (whose daughter married Gandhi's son), the modernist like Nehru (who confessed, "I loved the old man but never understood him"), the ascetic like Vinoba Bhave (who inherited his loin-cloth), the political revolutionary like Jayaprakash Narayan. . . . What a galaxy to carry on! And around Nehru to-day? There seems to be no one. And, after Nehru goes, to carry on? There seems to be nobody.

Weariness is often just another word for loneliness.

Cholera in Calcutta

TO-DAY remains the seventh and worst day of Calcutta's cholera epidemic. Thousands are ill, hundreds have died. On the streets, once or twice, I had a sickening glimpse of the symptoms, and on Brabourne Road, near the Portuguese Church, stinking garbage has been lying for days uncleared. The hospitals are already bulging, and where there is a clinic with a spare corner and some extra straw-matting there are no vehicles to transport the stricken. There are only 22 ambulances, and five have broken down, eight are still being tinkered with by mechanics, and two or three others just won't move.

I sipped tea with my friends uncomfortably, reassuring myself all the time that it was in fact boiling hot. They had, of course, been inoculated? Oh, no. Why not? No good reason. Didn't they believe the reports in the papers? To be sure. And the health of their children——? Resignation. I took a last sip of the tea and found it alarmingly luke-warm. . . .

In the evening, with Mazumdar, and in inflexible antiseptic calculation, we drink only Chinese whisky. He tells me that the health authorities of the city administration have promised "to investigate the causes of the epidemic," and "to take appropriate action." I storm. The causes have been known for a century. And the appropriate action lies at the tip-end of a hypodermic needle! and in cleaning the garbage off the streets! and in digging sanitary wells! and boiling the water! and in getting ambulances that run! When there was so-called "germ warfare" on a Korean frontier thousands of miles away, there were Indian demonstrations and protests, and no one in Calcutta knew for certain whether there were any casualties or even a single real germ. Now it is all real, at home, and fatal; and nobody utters a peep. "Cholera may be curable," says Mazumdar, "but what seems incurable is our attitude that life is expendable." Still, he promises to write an editorial note about it (and does). "Good to be alive," he toasts, and we all gulp hard.

My friends have just telephoned. They apologise for the lateness of the hour, but they want to please me with the information that they all had just gone to the doctor's to receive their vaccine—more out of conciliatory politeness, I suspect, than out of a sense of urgent necessity. That would bring the city's total for inoculations up to about a million. Only a few more million to go.

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The Language Problem

WHEN people have not been fighting over frontiers or precious treasure, then they have been quarrelling over the colour of skins—and the colour of words. In Bombay the supporters of the Gujerati language (especially well-to-do merchants) and the Maharashtrans (whose lower-class elements have been agitated by the Communists) have rioted—and murdered—in the city streets. In Ceylon the Tamil minority, outraged by the letter *"sri"* on the new licence plates, have been overturning—and burning—buses, trams, and automobiles. Somewhere in the Indian countryside (I have been searching for him, but in vain) there is Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, the brilliant and unpredictable Berlin-educated socialist leader, in the midst of proclaiming an *"Angrezi Hatao"* or "Banish English" week; and he has been marching with volunteer bands, roving from street to street, tearing down signboards, erasing English names.

In November, 1949, the Constituent Assembly, although sharply divided (the debates, of course, were in the mother tongue of the British *Raj*), approved by a majority of one vote the decision to make Hindi the official language of India. The strange paradox of this question of the English language would seem to be that those who speak English have opposed it, and those who have always resented it have suddenly become the champions of "the language of Shakespeare and modern scientific truth."

"I was a sentimentalist, too," Rajogopolachari confessed one evening in Madras to me. "I was, after all, the last Governor-General of India, and I could not help feeling—then—that the continuance of a foreign language would be derogatory to our national prestige. English was the speech of the conquerors whom we allowed to take possession of our country. We disliked them. But now that Englishmen are gone, anger has gone. We have become calmer, quieter. And what the Englishman has left behind is no longer his property. Why should we throw it away? Have we thrown away his railways and telegraph wires? We have not even sent back the statues still standing in our parks. The decision was an erroneous step taken when thought was not ripe. It should be suspended. I have said so publicly and Nehru has accused me of 'waging a cold war' against him. But Hindi is simply not rich enough and good enough for all our purposes. We need English for science, for intellectual life, for international affairs. At home our people should continue to speak their mother-tongues, in my own case Tamil."

But not all the new defenders of English against "Hindi imperialism" are friends of the other thirteen national languages. (It is probably fourteen official competitors now, for in Delhi I heard a clever editor put on a show of dialectics in a press conference with Nehru—"if our Anglo-Indian community shares equal rights in Indian democracy, is then their language, English, also not a national tongue of our people?" —whereupon he got what he wanted, namely, a weary concession from the Prime Minister, "I suppose so....")

"Beware of all of our eloquence on the linguistic issue," Purshottam warned, "beware of all of our *bunk*! Most of the languages which are with us to-day have been preserved only by illiteracy! They would have passed away generations ago if people could read and write something else. What was the Gujerati I learned as a boy? Nothing but a miserable dialect. And to-day I never use it. My wife is from the South, but I know no Malayalam. So we have always spoken to each other in English. And every now and then, in some outburst of infantile romanticism, we might quote some of our own tender love poetry to each other. But what are these verses really—nothing more than a few flowery phrases, and these are passed off nowadays as the richness of regional cultural traditions."

Yet, in Calcutta, they would not love English so much had they not loved Bengali more. This is the land of Rabindranath Tagore, and even the most solicitous of guides would have dragged me off to Shanti Niketan, a hundred blistering miles away, to see his Bengali manuscripts and his Bengali landscapes. Ayyub hand-winds his old victrola to play Tagore songs for me. Buddhadeva Bose reads rapturously a single line of his Bengali poetry

Nishidin bharsha rākhish, oré mon habei habé

which, in its "utter untranslatability," comes out only as "Have hope, O my heart, hope day and night, for it will be, it will be...."

There is here a literary pride of fierce intensity. And what a brilliant campaign has this shrewd and effective intelligentsia conducted on the Indian political scene! Seen from here, Hindi seems almost to be a lost cause.

S. K. CHATTERJI: "Is it true that the Hindi-speaking minority in India amounts to 42 per cent of our population? It is not. This figure has been inflated by improperly combining the figures for Rajasthani, Kosali, Bhojpuri, Urdu Punjabi, and Maithili, some of which are totally distinct.... We are faced by a very serious menace to Indian unity in this linguistic chauvinism. Some have even started a slogan, *'Hind, Hindu, Hindi*, these three are one!'"

BUDDHADEVA BOSE: "Nor is it a fact that Hindi, which is our official language and is soon

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to be our national language, is 'spoken and understood in practically every part of the country.' You have probably listened to *bazaar*-Hindi in our railway stations. But this is not a language known to god or man! It is only a collection of corrupt words devoid of grammar or syntax, in which the crudest communication is just barely possible. What is it good for? For haggling! But this peculiar form of oriental activity can be conducted in signs and gestures, as you no doubt have discovered, without benefit of any language at all...."

AMLAN DATTA: "This whole misfortune in India has been based only on a misreading of the 19th century in Europe. Scraps of Herder have led to absurd notions of the relations between nationality and language. As if Belgium didn't have two languages, and Switzerland three, as if the future united Europe would not have a dozen! If no other country in history has ever adopted a 'foreign' language for official use, then let India be the first."

ABU SAYEED AYYUB: "Our country 'unified and integrated' by a common shared tongue—this is a wish. And wishes are good horses to ride. But India, you see, has never had *one* national language. In ancient times Sanskrit was the language of a strictly limited élite (and only of men). In Moghul times Persian was exclusively the language of the court. Now it is true that in addition to *bazaar*-Hindi, with its makeshift vocabulary of a few hundred words, there is the prosy 'Khariboli' Hindi, a fine and difficult tongue. But it scarcely existed a century ago. It has neither ancient richness nor modern usefulness. Brahmin pandits will have to create a dictionary full of new words and phrases! Let us not search for simple or heroic solutions. We believe and take pride in the fact that India's chief contribution to the progress of civilisation is a spirit of synthesis which reconciles differences without obliterating them, which welcomes diversity of culture and tradition, of race and religion. Should we now therefore be ready to recognise and proclaim to the world that India has not one but a dozen national languages, just as it has not one but half a dozen national religions?"

Still: if not all champions of English are supporters of the traditional languages, not all spokesmen for the regional cultures command fluency in the beloved mother tongues. Even in Bengal one writer told me that he still has "difficulties," for he had lived too long in the Indian west. And in the south one impassioned young man insisted that "a people should have the language in which it dreams!"—but then admitted that his own Telegu, alas, was not good enough for dreaming.

Rajaji

"NEVER will there be an evening like this even if we have seven re-births!" whispered the young man to me, as old Rajagopolachari hobbled away from our garden circle. It had been something of a rare occasion for the worshippers of Rajaji (in fact for us all) to be in the presence of this wizened, aged man, said by so many to be the wisest and most fearless in the land. He alone, of all the former close associates of Gandhi, has remained politically independent, without official position, a gadfly of the State. How weird are all the local loving appellations for this man who has never been outside of India—a "modern Socrates," an "Asian Savonarola," a "brahmanised Gladstonian liberal."

He sat with us for hours, talking, listening, and I was magnetised by this most impressive and unforgettable personality I had met in India. He reminded me, as we sat there, of what the Mahatma must have been like—hunched and shrunken together, and behind the soft voice and smile, a piercing, subtle, understanding intelligence.

"Gandhi?" says Prabhakar later, in our last argument. "Oh, no. Gandhi-ji has the wisdom and the cleverness—and the face!—of a child. Rajaji has the wisdom and the foxiness—and the face!—of an old woman." But perhaps this was only because Rajaji had prevented Prabhakar, with a small, stern, non-violent gesture of his hand, from copying wicked little quotations into his notebook.

I now regret that Prabhakar did not get away with his secret jottings. Rajaji said many extraordinary things, some gently, some savagely, but above all he prodded and parried in the most spectacular way. He disdains the mantle of "minor saintliness," and spurns popular messages of hope. He did not mind being taken for a whining old man longing for the past. He was sad, but not sentimentally so, rather out of the sense of loss which civilisations in decay inevitably impart. Yet if he prefers no record, let us say that all the details were lost in the luminous enchantment of the evening.

Taking off

IN the last minutes of a journey one finally learns how to ask the questions with which one should have begun. I sit fastened on to my plane seat, and search through my pockets and papers for scraps of notes, backs of envelopes, calling cards, loose clippings, and hotel messages. It comes to an untidy but reassuring pile. All the answers, surely, must be in there, somewhere. Odds-and-ends begin to slip away from

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me, and I ask the Air-India stewardess (in *sari*) for a bag or a piece of string. (She is dark-skinned and well-educated—but what Indian language does she speak? does she adore Nehru? is she happier in a machine than her mother in the village? will she have difficulties getting married?) I get a single piece of matted hair from a jute bag in the back, and the whole plunder is safely secured. I fondle it playfully, but with increasing uneasiness. Had I found everything, and had I gotten it all right? An old familiar uncertainty begins to upset me. I recall the night when work, at last, was finished on my book on the Hungarian revolution and I felt, nightmarishly, a hand on my shoulder drawing me away pitilessly from the litter on my desk, and a voice said, "In the first place, it was not a revolution but an earthquake, in the second place it was Bulgaria not Rumania, and in the third place. . . ."

Alan Ross

Algerian Refugee Camp, Ain-Khemouda

You have black eyes,
Four years of age,
A chic, cast-off coat
—pepper-and-salt, double-breasted,
A label naming you 'Mohammed,'
Some slippers, a squashed felt hat.
Nothing else. And 'nothing' means just that.

This camp is your home until—well, until.
A flag flaps on a hill.
The *oued* soon will be dry.
Do you know how to cry?

Smoke curls from the tents
Where women who are not your mother,
Hennaed and trinketed, cook.
Your eyes see but do not look.
And men who are not your father,
Turbaned and burned, sit stiff
In rows, like clay pigeons, on a cliff.
Targets do not easily relax.
Your hair is fair as flax.

Guns rattle the mauve hills
Where the last warmth spills
On villages where once you were
One of a family that died.
Not much else. Just that.

You pull down the brim of your hat.
I do not know what goes on inside.

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St.-John Perse

Narrow are the vessels

Fragment from "Seamarks" *translated by Wallace Fowlie*

Lovers, O late-comers among the marbles and the bronzes, in the lengthening fires of evening,
Lovers who kept silent in the midst of alien crowds,
You too will testify tonight in honour of the Sea:

1

. . . Narrow are the vessels, narrow our couch. Immense the expanse of waters, wider our empire. In the closed chambers of desire.

Summer enters, coming from the sea. To the sea only shall we say
What strangers we were at the festivities of the City, and what star rising from undersea festivities,
Hung one evening, over our couch, on the scent of the gods.
In vain the surrounding land traces for us its narrow confines. One same wave throughout the world, one same wave since Troy
Rolls its haunch toward us. On a far off open sea this gust was long ago impressed . . .
And the clamour one evening was loud in the chambers: death itself, blowing its conches, could not have been heard!
The vessels shall you love, O lovers, and the sea high in the chambers!
The land one evening mourns its gods, and man hunts rust-red badgers; cities wear down, women dream . . . . May it always be at our door
That immense dawn called sea—élite of wings and levying of weapons; love and sea of the same bed, love and sea in the same bed—
and this dialogue again in the chambers:

2

1 ". . . Love, love, that holds so high the cry of my birth, how great a sea moving toward the Woman who loves! Vine trampled on all shores, blessing of foam in all flesh, and song of bubbles on the sands . . . Homage, homage to the divine Ardour!
You, avid man, unclothe me: master more calm here than on his deck the master of the ship. And so much clothing falls away, there is nothing of the woman that you have not

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greeted. Summer opens, which is fed by the sea. And my heart opens to you a woman fresher than green water: seed and sap of sweetness, acid mingled with milk, salt with vivid blood, and gold and iodine, and the flavour too of copper with its essence of bitterness—all the sea borne in me as in the maternal urn . . . .

And on the shore of my body man born of the sea lies stretched out. May he refresh his face even at the spring beneath the sands; and rejoice on my soil, like the god tattooed with male fern . . . . My love, are you thirsty? I am woman at your lips keener than thirst. And my face in your hands as in hands fresh from shipwreck, ah! may there be for you in the warm night freshness of almond and flavour of dawn, and first awareness of fruit on the foreign shore!

I dreamed, the other evening, of islands greener than any dream . . . . And sailors landed on the shore in search of blue water; they saw—it was ebb-tide—the new made bed of streaming sands: an arborescent sea had left there, as it sank, its pure capillary prints, like those of great tortured palms, or of tall enraptured girls laid down in tears among their loin-cloth and unbraided tresses.

And these are figures of a dream. But you, man of upright brow, inhabiting the reality of the dream, you drink right from the round mouth, and know its punic lining: flesh of pomegranate and heart of prickly-pear, fig of Africa and fruit of Asia . . . . Fruits of woman, O my love, are more than fruits of the sea: from me not painted nor adorned, receive an earnest of the Sea Summer . . . ."

2 ". . . In the heart of man, solitude. Strange the man, shoreless, near the woman, herself a shore. And myself a sea at your orient, as if mingled with your golden sand, may I go once more and linger on your shore, in the slow unrolling of your coils of clay—woman who forms and unforms with the wave that engenders her . . . .

And you, more chaste for being more naked, clothed by your hands alone, you are no Virgin raised from the depths, Victory of bronze or white stone recovered, with the amphora, in the great meshes laden with seaweed by the workers; but woman's flesh before my face, woman's warmth in my nostrils, and woman's whole radiance, her aroma, like the rose flame of fire between half-joined fingers.

And as salt is in the wheat, the sea in you in its essence, the thing in you which was of the sea, has given you that taste of a happy woman to whom I come . . . . And your face is upturned, your mouth is fruit to be consumed, in the hull of the bark, in the night. Free my breath on your throat, and from everywhere the rising of seas of desire, as in the full tides of the closest moon, when the female land opens to the salacious, supple sea, adorned with bubbles even in its ponds, its maremmas, and the sea high in the grass makes the sound of a noria, the night bursts with sea hatchings . . . .

O my love who tastes of the sea, may others graze their eclogues far from the sea, in the depth of the sealed valleys—mint, melissa and melilot, warmth of alyssum and marjoram—and there one talks of bee-keeping, another deals with lambing, and the felt-padded ewe kisses the earth at the foot of the walls dusted with black pollen. When the peaches are set, and the ties for the vine are sorted, then have I cut the knot of hemp which holds the hull on the ways, in its cradle of wood. And my love is on the seas! and my burning is on the seas! . . . .

Narrow are the vessels, narrow the alliance; and narrower still your measure, O faithful

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body of the beloved . . . And what is this body itself, save image and form of the ship? nacelle and hull, and votive vessel, even to its median opening; formed in the shape of a hull, and fashioned on its curves, bending the double arch of ivory to the will of sea-born curves . . . . The builders of hulls, in all ages, have had this way of binding the keel to the set of frames and planking . . . .

Vessel, my fine vessel, that yields on its timbers, and bears the burden of a man's night, you are to me a vessel bearing roses. You break the chain of offerings on the water. And here we are, against death, on the black acanthus paths of the scarlet sea. Immense is the dawn called sea, immense the expanse of the waters, and on the earth turned to dream, on our purple confines, all the distant swell that rises and crowns itself with hyacinths like a people of lovers!

There is no higher usurpation than in the vessel of love."

3

1 "My teeth are pure under your tongue. You weigh on my heart and govern my limbs. Master of the bed, O my love, like the Master of the ship. Gentle the helm at the touch of the Master, gentle the wave in his power. And it is another woman, within, who moans with the rigging . . . . One same wave throughout the world, one same wave reaching to us, in the very great distance of the world and of its age . . . . And such a surge, from all sides, that rises and finds its way up into us . . . .

Ah! do not be for me a master hard in his silence and in his absence: most skilful pilot, too thoughtful lover! Take, take from me more than your own giving. Loving, will you not also wish to be the beloved? . . . I am afraid, and anxiety dwells under my breast. Sometimes, the heart of man wanders far away, and beneath the arch of his eye there is, as within the high solitary arches, this great stretch of the Sea upright at the gates of the Desert . . . .

O you, haunted like the sea, by distant major things, I have seen your joined eyebrows seeking beyond woman. Does the night through which you steer hold no island, no shore? Who then in you always becomes estranged and denies himself?—But no, you have smiled, it is you, you come to my face, with all that great clarity of shadow like a great destiny on the march over the waters (O sea suddenly struck with light between its great spaces of yellow and green clay, like broad seeded fields!) And I, lying on my right side, hear your nomad blood beating against my bare woman's breast.

You are here, my love, and I have no place save in you. The source of my being I will raise toward you, and to you will I open my woman's night, clearer than your man's night; and in me the grandeur of loving will perhaps teach you the grace of being loved. License then for the body's play! Offering, offering, and favour of being! For the night opens a woman: her body, her havens, her shore; and her primeval night where all memory lies. May love make of her its lair!

. . . Narrow is my head between your hands, narrow my brow encircled with iron. And my face to be consumed like fruit from beyond the seas: mango oval yellow, flaming rose, which Asian runners over the stone of imperial highways carry to lay, one evening, before midnight, at the foot of a taciturn Throne . . . . Your tongue is in my mouth like wildness of the sea, the taste of copper is in my mouth. And our food in the night is no food of darkness, nor our drink, in the night, water from a cistern.

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You will tighten the grip of your hands on my lover's wrists, and my wrists will be, in your hands, like as the wrists of an athlete in their leather bands. You will bear my joined hands back behind my head; and we will also join our foreheads, as for the accomplishment of great things in the arena, of great things in the sight of the sea, and I myself will be your crowd in the arena, among the fauna of your gods.

Or free are my arms! . . . and my hands hold license among the harness of your muscles: over all the high relief of the back, over all the moving knot of the loins, a racing quadriga of your strength like the very musculature of the waters. I will praise you with my hands, O power! and you, nobility of a man's flank, wall of honour and pride which, stripped, still bears the mark of armour.

The falcon of desire strains on its leather leash. Love with joined eyebrows bends above its prey. And I have seen the change in your face, predator! as happens to the ravishers of offerings in the temples, when the god's anger descends on them . . . . You, god, our passing guest, salacious Conger of desire, ascend in us again the course of the waters. The copper obole is on my tongue, the sea flames in the temples, and love thunders in the conches like the Monarch in the Council chambers.

Love, love, alien face! Who opens to you the seaways deep in us? Who takes the helm, and from what hands? . . . Hasten to the masks, O precarious gods! cover the exodus of the great myths! Summer, crossed with autumn, bursts in the over-heated sands its eggs of bronze marbled with gold where monsters and heroes grow. And the sea in the distance smells strongly of copper and the odour of the male body . . . . Sea alliance is our love, rising to the Gates of Red Salt!"

2 ". . . Lover, I will raise no roof for the Beloved. Summer hunts with the boar-spear across the plowed plains of the sea. Desire whistles above the eyrie. And I, like the hawk of the shores reigning over its prey, have covered with my shadow all the radiance of your body. Celestial decree, that binds us! And the time is past, O proffered body, for raising in my hands the offering of your breasts. A place of lightning and of gold overwhelms us with its glory! Wages of embers, not of roses . . . . And was ever a maritime province, beneath its roses, so expertly pillaged?

Your body, O royal flesh, matures the signs of the Sea's summer: flecked with moons and moon dust, dotted with honey and dark wine colours, and filtered like sand through the sieves of gold washers—enamelled with gold and caught in the nets of great luminous seines that drag in clear water. Royal flesh, and sealed with a divine seal! . . . From the nape of the neck to the armpit, to the hollow of the knees, and from the inner thigh to the ochre of the ankles, I will seek, brow lowered, the occult cipher of your birth, among the assembled symbols of your natal order—like those stellar numerations which rise, each evening, from the undersea tables and drift slowly westwards to join in the panegyrics of the Sky.

Summer, burner of barks and of resins, mixes with the amber of woman the perfume of black pines. Tan of woman and glowing of amber are the scent and bite of July. Thus the gods, prey to an ailment which is not ours, turn to the gold of lacquer as though sheathed in women's skin. And you, robed in such a lichen, are naked no longer: flank adorned with gold, and thighs polished like the thighs of a hoplite . . . . Praise to you, tall body veiled by its own radiance, stamped like gold fresh from the mint of the Kings! (And who has not

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dreamed of laying bare those great ingots of pale gold, wrapped in the softest doeskin, which voyage toward the Courts, in the ships' stores, under their bands of heavy hemp and their network of wide rush-straps?

Ah! like Her who has drunk the blood of a royal person! yellow of the yellow of a priestess, and rose of the rose of great jars! You were born marked by the divine Standard. And what other flesh scorched at the fire of vine branches on the terraces has ever borne higher witness? Burned with love, the nape of the neck, ardent the hair where the fiery season dwelt, and the armpit seized with fever like ashes of roses in clay bowls . . . . You are like the bread offered on the altar, and bear the ritual incision heightened with the red mark . . . . You are the idol of virgin copper, in the form of a fish, that is smeared with honey from the rocks and the cliffs . . . . You are the sea itself in its lustre, when noon, explosive and violent, spills the oil of its lamps.

You are also the nubile soul and the impatience of rosy fire in the widening basins of the sand; you are the aroma, and the warmth, and the very favour of sand, its breath, in the shadow feasts of the flame. You smell of immortal dunes and all unassigned shores between land and sea, where the dream, pale poppy, trembles. You are the exclamation of salt, and the divination of salt, when the sea has withdrawn afar over its porous tables. You are the scale, and the green fire, and the snake of green fire, at the base of schists foliated with gold, there where the myrtle and the dwarf-oak and the wax-shrub of the beaches descend to the sea's fire seeking their freckles of red lichen . . . .

O woman, and fever made woman! lips which have known your ascent, bear no fragrance of death. Living—and who more alive?—you smell of green water and the reef, you smell of virgins and seaweed, and your sides are laved in the favour of our days. You smell of the stone spangled with stars and of copper heated in the lubricity of the waters. You are the stone laurelled with algae in the wake of the swell, and you know the underside of the tallest sea fronds incrusted with limestone. You sway with the wild oats and the sand millet and the marsh-grass of the flooded beaches; and your breath is in the exhalation of straw toward the sea, and you move with the migration of sand toward the sea . . . .

Drunk, very drunk regal heart, from harbouring such a swell, and the flesh more sensitive than the tissues of the eyes . . . . You follow the sea, ineluctable and strong, in its work. And you feel the incoercible pulse, and are open—bound, unbound—to the dilation of the waters; and the retractable sea keeps pulsing in you its rings, its pupils, and the day contracts, and the night enlarges, the immense eye that possesses you . . . . Homage! homage to the complicity of the waters. There, no offence to your soul! Like the violent spirit of the god who takes possession of the unborn man in the woman, and tramples the woman in her linens and divided membranes, ah! like the sea itself, devourer of kelp and embryos, and who casts before the assembly of Judges and Mothers her great placentary pouches and her great folds of kelp, her very large leather aprons for midwives and Sacrificers, may it please the sacred pleasure to rejoin its victim, and may the Woman lying in her floral sheaths deliver to the sea's night the bruised flesh of a great labiate! No offence there to her soul . . . .

Immersion! submission! May the sacred pleasure flow in you, its dwelling! And the jubilation is high in the flesh, and spur to the flesh is the joy of the flesh. I have seen glistening between your teeth the red poppy of the goddesses. Love at sea burns its vessels. And you take delight in the divine ardour, as do the agile gods seen through the clear water, where the shadows move, releasing their light girdles . . . . Homage, homage to the divine

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diversity! One same wave throughout the world, one same wave our course . . . . Narrow the measure, narrow the caesura, which breaks the woman's body at the middle like an ancient meter . . . . You will grow, licence! The lubricious sea exhorts us and the odour of its basins lingers in our bed . . . . Red as the red sea-urchins are the chambers of pleasure."

4

1 ". . . Cries of passion in the arena, sighs of passion in the night are but cooings of a storm in flight over the waters. Doves of storm and cliffs, and a heart that breaks on the sand, how much sea there still is in the tearful joy of the Woman who loves! . . . You, the Oppressor, who trample us, like coveys of quail and floods of migratory wings, will you tell us who calls us together?

Sea mingled in my voice and sea blended always in me, love, love that speaks loudly on the breakers and the coral reefs, will you allow measure and grace to the body of a woman who loves too much? Cry of woman, vintage in the press—cry of woman, joyous and unharmed . . . extend, O Master, my torment; draw out, O Master, my delight! What tender prey harpooned was ever to her joy so chastised?

Woman am I and mortal, in all flesh deserted by Love. For us the cruel team racing over the waters. May it trample us under its hooves, and batter us with its ram, and with the bronze-studded pole may it strike us down! . . . And the Woman holds her Lover like a tribe of brutes, and the Lover holds the Woman like a melée of stars. And my body opens without decency to the Stallion of the rite, like the sea itself to the assaults of the lightning. O Sea raised against death! How much love is marching through the world to an encounter with your horde! One single wave on its lever! . . . And you the Master, who command, you know the use of our weapons. And love alone holds in suspense, holds on its threatening stem, the tall wave curving and sleek on its painted cebra's throat.

No flute of Asia, swelling the bulb of its gourd, would appease the dilated monster. But tongue to tongue, and breath to breath, panting, her face streaming and her eyes devoured with acid, she who alone sustains the ardent controversy, the Lover, erect in wrath, who recoils, who bends taut, and stands fast, utters her hissing of lover and priestess . . . .

Will you strike, divine staff?—Favour of the monster, my reprieve! and more strident, the impatience! . . . Death with bevelled head, love with faired head darts its very frequent tongue. Incessant is its name; innocence is its hour. Hear death living—its cry of a cicada . . . .

You will strike, promise!—More prompt, O Master, your answer, and stronger your summons! Speak louder, despot! and assail me more assiduously: irritation is at its height. Search farther, royal Conger: so does lightning on the sea seek the ship for a sheath . . . .

You have struck, divine lightning!—Who in me gives this very great cry of a woman unweaned? . . . O splendour! O sadness! and the very tall comb of immortality crowning the radiant foam! and all this glory which flares out, golden harrow! . . . Did I haunt there the forbidden, and the heart of fable?

You, god, who were there, my guest, keep alive in me the helix of your rape. And may we also be ravished by this very long cry of the soul—not cried aloud! . . . Death, dazzling and vain, goes, with the step of mimes, to honour other beds. And the alien Sea, seeded with foam, engenders far off on other shores its parade chargers . . . .

These tears, my Love, were not tears of a mortal woman."

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2 ". . . Vessel which opens on its keel, illumined with embers and with gold, flaming brazier of the shipwreck! O splendour, O sadness! To haunt the Being, and so prompt! The sea is not more eager to consume its god . . . .

Favour for Her who was there, and so briefly was there—ah! like One who drank blood from the royal cups and who no longer knows her caste nor her rank, but whose dream still remembers: "I frequented death, dazzling and vain, I conversed as an equal with the faceless lightning: and I, who know of the sea more than the living know, know also the ancient evil in its glade of yellow fire. He who dreams of the naked sword resting in clear waters, has not banished from the tale the torches and the tears . . . ."

Tears of the loved one, O ill-loved one, do not have their source in the lover. Enmity to the jealous god who harvests your vine in my arms! Alien the hand which presses the grape between our faces. You, the undivided one, betrayed . . . . Transgression, transgression, O sadness! To haunt the Being is but act of a mime. Has someone then spoken? He could not be heard. The uninhabitable is our site, and intrusion yields no profit. But the pride of living is in the reaching, not in the using or having.

. . . You will rise again, Desire! And you will tell us your other name. O passion, royal highway, where the drunken King, escorted by the Blind, rises from the dust again! Desire, desire, who goes before us and assists us, is that your only name and is there no other? . . . O you who cause the sand to cry far off on invisible thresholds, and make visible on the waters the approach of the message, O you, the Precursor and you the Annunciator, yours is the widest search, and your ways are numberless. You recover your breath before me. And always offering your weapon, will you always offer me the woman as arrow for the bow?

Tornadoes in the wake of desire, and lightning from all sides scattering its portents! The suction of the strong god is on the tumefied surface of the waters. The sea with its lophius mask no longer weds the gloomy depth of things. Desire, O Master, live your work! . . . And the craggy sea of the dream, with great shafts of black glass, like vitrified lava, yields to the chisel its cubes, its trihedrals!

Go down, sculptor, great of heart—for the work is great—among your daughters, your labourers, and all your host of quarriers. O Dream, look again on your work: not the shield of the goldsmith, nor the mirror of chased silver overrun with the ignominy of roses (the leopard in the vineyard, the virgin on the bull's back and the dolphin crowned with vine branches of foam),

But of a single mass and of a single block of jet, shiny and black, like a load of iron links in the packed holds of ships, all this powerful plexus of forces and of alliances: the sea, its ring-bolts, its sphincters, and its millions of mouths closed on the ring of desire—or else the sea out of its bonds, in its great robe of a black mare slashed with wounds: fresh and lubricious openings!

. . . My love, I have better to say, and the gods have passed: of one surface and of one stretch, on the back of the swell, and on its long smooth tables of graphite, in the far appeasement of the most beautiful fields of grey poppies, I saw of a sudden the immovable sea, colour of sediment: the sea far off like a Sudan dreaming of its black queens with their foreheads punctuated with blue . . . .

. . . O woman, high in her flood as if taken in her course! I will rise again in arms in the night of your body, and will be streaming again with your sea years.

Close bound again the soul, at the incision of the body! And you, singing and stammering

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on your thorny bank, Sibyl open on her rock like the Erythrean virgin—great hydra of force and tenderness who disgorges her god—you will again frequent the truth of the dream: that other sea, more vast and nearby, that no one teaches or names.

Run your course, transient god. We are your relays! One same wave throughout the world, one same wave since Troy . . . . The swell rises and is made woman. The sea with the belly of a loving woman kneads untiringly its prey. And love causes the singing, and the sea the rocking, of the cedar bed on its boards, of the curved hull on its joints. Our bed rich with offerings and with the burden of our works . . . .

Virgin nailed to my prow, ah! like she who is immolated, you are the libation of the wine at the cutwater of the bow, you are the offering of the high seas to the dead who rock the living: the loose chain of red roses which opens over the waters after the rites of farewell —and the vessels of the trader will cut through the fragrant line in the night.

Desire, O Prince under the mask, you told us your other name! . . . And you the Loved one, again you whistle for your God your whistle of an osprey. And you, the Loved one, you will again arch yourself on your breath for the delivering of the cry—until that very soft utterance, guard it, and that lowest vowel that enlists the god . . . . Submission, submission! . . . Submissive again to the question!

And who then has roused you again to violence, rearing on your wings, like the female eagle on its faggot of thorns, talon pressed against the flank of the Questioner? . . . O most powerful embattled briar backed against the rock, you hold higher than the sea your invective against death. Let love and the sea be heard! Birth and death in the same slings! . . . I have unleashed the lightning, and its quest is not in vain. You will strike, divine lightning! . . . To haunt the Being is not a delusion. And the Woman who loves is no mime. Forked tree of the rape which the lightning ascends! . . .

—Thus She who has a name strikes at noon the dazzling heart of the waters: Ishtar, splendid and naked, spurred with lightning bolts and green eagles, in the great green gauzes of her driftwood fire . . . . O splendour, not sadness! Love which triumphs and does not retreat! and the heart at last free from death! . . . You have given me this very great cry of a woman which lasts over the waters."

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Our Bomb and Theirs (IV)

The Crusade that Went Astray

Paul Ignotus

THE other day I talked to a Hungarian lady who had just come from the London Women's Meeting against Nuclear Warfare. She spoke of it with tears in her eyes. The high selflessness of the speakers and of the audience, their devotion to moral principles—all this made her feel that the British were, after all, the most civilised and decent people on earth. No doubt about it: there is a tremendous moral capital in crusading against these horrible weapons of mass-destruction, in one of the very few countries which disposes of them. Moreover, the crusaders are an intellectual and—even more—a spiritual élite of their nation, appropriately headed by a great philosopher. Whether they are liberal or socialist, Christian or rationalist, they are it in the truest and least equivocal sense of the term. God save Britain from ever lacking such men and women. God save her also from following their advice.

The dangers about which they warn are real dangers. One cannot be sufficiently horrified by them. But the remedies they propose would be bound to increase the dangers instead of eliminating them.

These dangers may be divided into four categories. (1) The harmful effects of uncontrolled radioactivity, "fall-out," etc. (2) The destruction which might be caused by thermonuclear warfare. (3) The obsession with military answers to world political problems, which diverts the minds of people on both sides of the Iron Curtain from striving for a peaceful settlement. (4) The economic losses and sacrifices involved.

As to fall-out and the like, scientists alone are in a position to estimate the dimensions of the danger. I have read a great number of their expositions and can only say that their opinions on the matter seem to be no less divided than those of laymen, and exactly on the same emotional, political, or philosophical grounds. One thing is clear: that the possibilities of distorting all living organisms on our planet by the artificial increase of radiation are enormous. It seems no less clear that such dangers exist irrespective of whether the radioactive devices are used to heal cancer, to provide industrial power, to raise the standard of living of distressed areas, to undertake a trip to the moon, or to produce weapons suitable for the extermination of millions. I have read what I take to be an authoritative statement according to which the effects on an average person of X-rays used for medical or research purposes is many times greater than what can be attributed to the fall-out from A- and H-bomb tests. If a baby is tragically crippled by radioactive particles infecting his milk, it does not make any difference to him or his parents whether these particles escaped from an atomic pile originally destined to give warmth and light to that baby, or to protect him against possible attack by an aggressive nation which seeks to make him its slave.

The question is whether it is worth tampering with the nuclei in any way at all if, besides the great blessings and splendid achievement which can be expected from further scientific discovery, such hideous consequences must also be reckoned with. As far as I know, except for religious cranks and romantics, no one has suggested that nuclear energy, X-raying, and the like should be abandoned. This however would be the only logical step to take for those who view the future of mankind with grave concern because of the increased amount of radiation. I am perfectly willing to share that concern. But why so much panic about the radiation from bomb tests in particular? The A- and H-bombs are murderous things and should be viewed as such. Whether or not one should ever use them, and under what conditions, is an agonising problem. But once we have decided not to stop scientific progress as a whole, any unqualified reference to the dangers of fall-out is really

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beside the point. And this can clearly be seen from the fact that, even if the tests are indefinitely suspended, the biological (as against the political) issue will not be much affected. The projected expansion of nuclear energy programmes will keep the problem with us for a long time.

THE most serious facet of the problem is the danger implicit in having such dreadful weapons of mass-extermination in store. The crusaders against the bomb are doubtless right in arguing that the special standing of our planet, as the habitat of human life, is in peril. Two great powers are either able or will shortly be able completely to devastate the earth, if they wish to do so. There is no guarantee that either of them might not at some time be ruled by someone like Hitler who would have been only too pleased to press an all-exterminating button as an alternative to his defeat. Furthermore, besides the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom already disposes of thermonuclear weapons; France has announced her plan to produce some A-bombs within a short time; and it should not be surprising if, within the next decade or two, any maddened dictator of a comparatively small country is in a position to unleash thermonuclear attacks, provoking retaliations in kind, with the ultimate result of stopping life for all.

How, then, could this danger be prevented?

The immediate ideas offering themselves to anybody—and indeed the ones on the agenda—are those of (a) stopping bomb tests; (b) stopping the production of bombs; (c) destroying the existing bombs; and (d) making a solemn pledge never to use them.

Stopping the tests is the cry of the moderate anti-bomb camp—of those who would like to eat their bomb and have it too. It is a justified wish and I should only be too glad to think that it could be realised. The American top strategists may or may not be right in saying that this would leave Russia (who had just finished a series of tests when she announced her willingness suddenly to stop them) with an unjustified advantage in the bomb race. British Labour leaders may or may not be right in their hope that such a gesture on the part of Britain would turn the sympathy and confidence of the uncommitted towards their country and movement. But, whichever point of view prevails, it will have no bearing on the truly vital question of whether the bomb will or will not be used for extermination.

Let me now for a moment skip suggestion (b) so as to say what little is worth saying about (c) and (d). Both suggestions could be accepted, from one day to another, without the slightest consequence, either good or bad. Any solemn pledge will unilaterally be revised by any dictator at any moment thought suitable by him; and his potential adversaries would certainly have to be prepared to retaliate in kind—which would impose upon them the moral obligation of looking for loopholes in the agreements from the onset. This applies to an almost equal extent to the dismantling of the stock of existing bombs. Bombs can be hidden in comparatively little space, and it would not at all be astonishing if there were, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, people who thought it their patriotic duty to do so.

Production of bombs is a far more important matter. That can be checked because it can be inspected. But it can only be checked if it is allowed to be inspected. Even then, of course, there may be ways of getting around the inspection—there are such vast territories in America as well as Siberia. No doubt, a totalitarian régime could camouflage its industrial proceedings, contrary to international agreement, more easily than a democracy. But this would be a chance worth taking. The very fact of an international agency's being authorised to inspect whatever spot on earth it chooses would seriously break through the veil of secrecy under which plans to overrun, enslave, or exterminate nations are prepared and executed. This and this alone would be a genuine guarantee—not against nuclear warfare but against the arbitrariness of rulers which makes preparation for it a vital necessity. For this very reason, it is feared that Russia will not consent to it until some radical change takes place either in the present "thermonuclear stalemate" or in her own political structure. It is not for the West to dissuade her from doing so. The most far-reaching agreements, even at the cost of strategic sacrifices, should again and again be offered to her—subject to international inspection. Nevertheless, I am afraid this is both much more than the Soviet Bloc would for the time being be willing to stomach and far less than would satisfy the crusaders against A & H. These (or most of them) quite rightly think that the Soviet Union, while welcoming for its own reasons any anti-nuclear effort in the West, would never tolerate similar efforts in its own realm, let alone allow them to influence its diplomacy or strategy. They only appeal to the West as a whole, or to the West excepting the United States, or to Great Britain. They do it in the hope that their moral example will compel the Soviet Union to apply similar standards; and, if not, some add, it is still better for the human race to be enslaved by the Russian rulers, with a chance of regaining lost liberties in coming centuries, than to be exterminated with no hope whatever.

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I FEEL myself compelled to challenge all these assumptions.

The great thinker who has placed himself at the head of the anti-nuclear crusade—and who has spoken so superbly on behalf of man's freedom in general and the freedom of my native land in particular—has gone to great lengths to demonstrate to the world what its doom, in the event of unlimited thermonuclear warfare, would be like. He did not go to equivalent lengths to demonstrate what it would be like to survive under unlimited tyranny. Both of these dangers are real, and both are equally unprecedented in the memory of mankind. Every tyranny up to now has been limited by the absence of mechanical means to exert pressure on every subject simultaneously and constantly, and the existence of rival tyrannies (if not always free countries). The Second World War liberated us from the danger of a tyranny expanding over the globe and becoming so petrified and waterproof as to exclude the possibility of its ever being shaken from "inside" once it had eliminated those defying it from "outside." All the hopes vested by moralists in the revolt of human conscience, or by dialectical materialists in class warfare or the stress of "internal contradictions," proved futile until bombers, guns, and tanks arrived on the spot in sufficient quantity to evoke conscience and make contradictions manifest. Short of this, Hitler might have been absolutely justified in his prophecy that mankind would live under the system established by him for thousands of years to come. This system was quite clearly designed as a form of slavery for most human beings. It was to transform mankind into almost another animal species. It was to exterminate, with reasonable chances of success, all potentialities of what we call human. At the apex of this system, world power was to be concentrated in the hands of one ruler. There has never been, and can never be, a guarantee of such a ruler's not being in a mood for committing suicide in the company of everybody else. Nor is there any reason to think that, should civil discord flare up within the ruling class, or civil war between it and its slaves, nuclear weapons would not be used unhesitatingly. Mankind could have got eventual extermination in addition to immediate slavery.*

I only chose the example of Hitler to demonstrate what the idea of capitulation could lead to. I do not say that Khrushchev is a Hitler. But it is precisely because he is altogether a far more sober tyrant than Hitler was, that there is a chance of dissuading him from plunging into an adventure which would be bound to result in his destruction as well as everyone else's. The question is whether lofty moral gestures or the production of murderous bombs is a more effective means to dissuade him.

Let us examine in as detached a manner as possible the results which could be expected from either of these means of dissuasion (or for that matter, persuasion).

I do not want to be facetious about the effects of noble moral examples. They can work in the right place and at the right moment. Why rule out the possibilities of their impressing the Soviet leaders? Are they so wicked as necessarily to sneer at every act of generosity and to assault everybody out of sheer sadism when able to do so without great risk? I do not think so. However striking the similarities between Hitler's and Khrushchev's methods, one must not overstress them. Fascism and Communism are not the same things. It is the merit of Communism, as distinct from Fascism, to rear and train its most intelligent opponents. It was from the intellectuals disappointed with Communism or at any rate with its application—ranging from Panait Istrati in the early 'twenties to Peter Fryer after the Hungarian Revolution—that people learned what Communism in practice was like. From disappointed Fascists people could learn nothing except the art of changing sides. The believers in Communism, who thought and called themselves materialists, were idealists exposed to pangs of conscience. The believers in Fascism, who thought and called themselves idealists, were idolators of power whose faith could only be broken by military defeat.

The Russian dictatorship, though far from making substantial concessions to those who have remained its idealist-materialist worshippers, is at one with them in wanting to avoid war. Neither its economy nor its hopes for the future are based on war. This is the reason why it is worth searching, in spite of bitter disappointments, for ways of coming to terms with it. In this search, however, the precarious position in which the Russian rulers feel themselves must always be taken into consideration. There is no need by now to prove that they represent a network of new ruling classes, or rather castes, trembling for their existence which rests on their armed forces. Their creed enables them to think that any treachery or murder is justified if it serves their own interest which—they insist—should be regarded ultimately as the interest of mankind. The revolting practices to which my country has recently been subjected makes this clear enough.

Professor A. J. P. Taylor and others, horrified

* Does anyone believe for a moment that in a future conflict between Communist Russia and Communist China either régime would scruple to drop H-bombs?

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as much as every other decent and sound person by those treacheries and murders, exculpate Premier Khrushchev on the assumption that he must have ordered them against his will, pressed to do so by Mao-Tse-Tung from Peking or Molotov from Mongolia or some other evil spirit from outer space. I personally should be glad if this assumption were to prove well founded. As a Hungarian it is difficult for me to speak of the Russian Premier without hatred. But I belong to the tens of thousands indebted to him for their lives, and to the very few who admit this. It was on his order that I was released from gaol into which I had been put by Stalin. (So was Mr. Kádár, present-day First Secretary to the Communist Party in Budapest, no less than Cardinal Mindszenty, present-day guest of the American Legation in Budapest.) The gestures made by Khrushchev on and before the Twentieth Congress, which went so far to repudiate Stalinism, should be remembered as a source of hope. His subsequent practices in the direction of re-Stalinisation should, however, be regarded as a warning. Is he a good man under pressure to-day or was he a bad, wicked hypocrite three or four years ago? What we do know is that he is a talkative man and a passionate intriguer, as emotional as he is astute, a jolly good revengeful fellow who changes his mind on the spur of his own words; I see no reason to assume that either his fury against Stalin who had humiliated and intimidated him, or against Tito who had defied him, should not be sincere; and the murder of Imre Nagy and the rest was in his view but a punishment on Tito. Should I be wrong and should he have acted under pressure, this would only demonstrate that any statesman at the head of a totalitarian state such as the U.S.S.R. is compelled to act as he has done recently. This would imply an even darker picture of the present state of affairs, and warnings even graver, than the assumption of Khrushchev's guilt.

We do not really know anything of the struggles within the Soviet leadership. We can be sure that such struggles are going on because there has never yet been a state, let alone a huge dictatorship, without them. We should, as the anti-A & H camp rightly suggests, use our imaginative power to deduce what the possible reaction of one or another unknown faction in the U.S.S.R. would be to one or another move in the West. Let us assume that the West were moral enough to renounce the bomb. The reaction of the wicked and the Stalinist would be obvious. The reaction of the idealist-materialist too would, I am afraid, be exactly the same. For him, just as for Stalin, every country outside the Soviet sphere, with the possible exception of Yugoslavia, is "capitalism." It is his firm belief that capitalism breeds war, and that capitalists would in any case use their arms to destroy the "socialist" world when they felt that their hour had struck. "Now," our good idealist-materialist would say, "we can prevent this danger with comparatively little loss. It would be the greatest folly to miss this unique opportunity. We must march in at once...." I could not even resent the good man for thinking so. Once convinced that by abolishing private ownership of the means of production he has removed the root of all evil, he is quite justified in doing so. Nuclear disarmament in the West would entail an invitation to the Kremlin to overrun the globe, and would increase rather than diminish the dangers of exterminating mankind altogether.

In a word, the enslavement of mankind increases rather than decreases the chances of its extermination.

"But we do not say everybody should renounce nuclear arms. Let the Americans do as they like. We only urge that we, the British, should renounce them. Once we fulfilled the demands of our conscience in our own country we can be assured of having helped the right ideas to prevail in other countries as well." This is the argument repeated by most anti-A & H crusaders in this country. It sounds moving. But its meaning is completely unclear. Do those believing in it hope and expect that the United States will follow this lofty example? If so, it would mean the imminent danger of universal enslavement and ultimate extermination, as described above. If not, one may be compelled to question the intellectual sincerity behind the moral enthusiasm that gave birth to it. To give a moral example, in the hope that our most powerful neighbours will refrain from following it, is a breathtakingly grandiose act of hypocrisy. "Let the Yanks be immoral for us," might be a justified attitude, simply because the Yanks can more easily afford it; but it is unlikely to convince either the Yanks or the Bolsheviks of their being obliged to Britain for her moral grandeur.

It fact, it may convince both of them of the opposite—and that is the reason why I do not think that it is even a realistic attitude. Surely the Americans are not such devils as represented in the Fight for Peace Press. But they cannot be expected to be saints or masochists. Nor can they always be expected to be broad-minded. They have been frequently blamed, and with full reason, for their inclination to regard their impoverished and haughty British cousins as convenient scapegoats. They are not very much tempted to do so to-day. But once they were persuaded that they had been let down

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in their vital struggle for nuclear superiority, the temptation might well increase. A renunciation by Britain of nuclear weapons on moral grounds would disrupt the N.A.T.O. alliance. Britain could then no longer rely on American help if attacked by Russia. And then why should not Russia attack her? She would not have to be infernally wicked to do so. In fact, it would be common-sense on her part. Her idealist-materialists may not like the idea, but they would certainly be no more sentimental than was the Austrian empress Maria Theresa when, after her passionate protests against the dismemberment of Poland, she made the best of it. *"Elle pleure et elle prend"* Frederick the Great said of her. That could be said about the idealists in Washington as well as Moscow once the world offers itself to them for division.

It is a different matter if Britain's (or France's) renunciation of nuclear weapons takes place as part of a collectively planned N.A.T.O. strategy. This is what has been suggested by Mr. Crossman. It may be a sensible idea. It would be a comforting thing to see the weapons of mass exterminations controlled by only a few agencies (though never by one dictatorship alone), instead of being scattered at random. But the denunciation by Mr. Crossman and many others of the "nuclear obsession" seems to me only partly justified. The present "stalemate" proves that nuclear armament is not in itself enough to win a war. This does not mean that H-bombs should no longer be in store. It only means that conventional weapons should be in store as well.

This imposes very bleak tasks on a people determined to defend their freedom. It means the detestable routine of conscription and the spending of money on tanks and guns and fighters and battleships. It is a nasty prospect, but must be faced. The Russians, apparently, do face it. On the basis of Mr. Worsthorne's analysis (or on Mr. Garthoff's whom he quotes), one must accept that they are convinced that, in a coming war, thermonuclear weapons will either remain unused or be used only to strike initial blows so as to leave the final decision to conventional forces. The possibility which they do not seem to face is that of their being exterminated before having a chance to fight "conventionally." For this attitude I can see no other reason than indoctrinated unimaginativeness. The danger of world extermination is real whether it is the Soviets or the anti-Soviets who ignore it. It can be only averted by the Western powers by becoming a match for the Russians in the "conventional" fields while remaining so in the thermonuclear spheres.

DOES this mean giving up hope for a solid international settlement? By no means. Psychologically speaking, of course, the danger does exist that a man asked to spend part of his income on preparations for a possible war, and to sacrifice years of his youth in the Services, would not easily be inclined to believe that by getting some country "disengaged" and all countries subjected to international control he had achieved all he was supposed to. Armed men get bloody-minded—that has for ever been the evil in bringing up warriors. It will be a hard job to fight that evil. But, logically, there are no reasons why the fight should not be successful. Thermonuclear and conventional N.A.T.O. strength should not be used as an alternative to disengagement; it should be used as its precondition. I am very much attracted by the current disengagement schemes, whether they are labelled Kennan, Healey, or even Rapacki; while their details may be open to objection, their essence should by no means be abandoned. But there is no hope for them if they do not pay for the Russians. And they pay for the Russians only if the West is in all "fields of human conflict" at least as strong as they are.

What I suggest is the most far-reaching willingness to compromise while never giving up anything without a clear *quid pro quo*. Compromise should always be sought; and until it is possible to conclude it, there is every reason, in Mr. Crossman's words, "to strike a fair balance between the three great instruments of foreign policy—nuclear deterrent, conventional weapons, and economic aid." I see every reason for increasing the two latter, but none for decreasing the former.

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Robin Marris

Socialist Thoughts Out of Season

AS A lifelong social democrat, I write in a mood of considerable depression. For if present trends of public opinion continue, the Labour Party in the next election will be lucky to obtain 45 per cent of the popular vote, that is five percentage points less than the peak reached in 1951 and only ten more than in 1935. My sadness is enhanced by a belief that the weakness displayed in the overall figures lies mainly in what can still be described as the traditional working-class vote, in other words I believe much of the current talk of a new class structure to be exaggerated, or at least premature. There are always new entrants to the middle class, and there are always more in times of prosperity than in times of slump, but I do not think the contemporary manifestation of the phenomenon can really be construed as evidence of wholesale "bourgeoisification" of the British proletariat.

Contrary to what is sometimes thought, the Labour Party's electoral fortunes have always depended almost exclusively on the behaviour of the working-class vote *per se* (the working classes being defined as all manual workers, plus postmen and shop assistants but excluding typists and clerks). There is of course a hard core of middle-class radicals who habitually vote Labour, but they (*i.e.*, we) provide normally no more than about one-seventh of the total socialist poll; and even in 1945 when an extra million lower middle-class votes temporarily went Left, the election could have been won without them. The middle classes provide a significant proportion of the Labour leadership, but that is another matter. In the direct determination of the popular vote, far more working-class electors commonly vote Conservative than middle-class electors ever vote Labour.

Even in 1951, Labour polled little more than 60 per cent of the effective working-class electorate (which I define as 85 per cent of the working-class names on the register); most of the remaining 40 per cent voted Conservative. By 1955, I estimate, the proportion voting Labour had dropped to about 53 per cent, a great part of the difference being due to deliberate abstentions. There has never been a real recovery: the fluctuations of the various electoral indices have merely reflected fluctuating middle-class opinion about the government. The Labour vote has stagnated.

SOME radical Tory commentators have argued that the Labour Party's recent "new thinking" has failed to get anywhere near to the real needs, aspirations, and protests of the post-war working classes as they have developed under full employment and prosperity. Alternatively, Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne (to whose thoughts I revert later) suggested in last month's ENCOUNTER that the working classes now wish to abdicate participation in the democratic process and to be left alone to tinkle cocktail shakers (but not harpsichords) and, presumably, to watch television. The Liberals, of course, interpret the trend as a move away from "class" parties in favour of whatever it is the Liberals stand for.

I shall argue that each of these explanations contains an element of truth, but that for the natural radical like myself none of the three, taken alone, leads anywhere. And indeed, as far as concerns the Liberals, even after con-

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sidering their attributes as objectively as I am able, I am convinced that if their revival were actually to succeed it would mean the end of true radicalism as a force in British politics for some time to come. The Liberals may currently be picking up a small amount of misguided support from genuine radicals, but the typical Liberal remains a pathological middle-of-the-roader. This can be seen not only in their specific policy pronouncements, but also from their known political psychology. If you ask a representative sample of middle-class Liberal voters what they think about Jews, coloured people, hanging, flogging, sexual ethics, or religion, their average answers will fall neatly between those of similar samples of middle-class Conservatives on the one hand and middle-class socialists on the other. Their one apparently radical gimmick, the H-bomb issue, I believe to be a fraud: although I am not a supporter of unilateral disarmament, I have a great admiration for those who are, and I would be willing to bet that among the Aldermaston marchers, despite the fact that the demonstration was organised by a Liberal, Labour voters outnumbered Liberal voters, actual and prospective, by ten to one.

All this being so, it is more than worth while for natural radicals to attempt to rethink their assessment of the socialist rethinking. Any reasonably objective student of the subject must concede that the intellectual quality, especially in analysis, displayed in the relevant corpus of socialist literature is of a remarkably high order. To take two recent examples. Whether or not one believes that a Labour government would in practice be less unsuccessful in maintaining the balance between inflation and stagnation in the internal economy than the Conservative Government has been, one can hardly deny the technical sophistication and realism of the programme outlined in the various recent pronouncements of Mr. Harold Wilson. (This is a judgment which stands independently of more fundamental criticisms of Labour politico-economic policy which I develop below.) Similarly, whatever one's personal opinions about the proposed policy for education (and I am one who deplores the retreat over the public schools as much as others deplore what they imagine to be a plot against the Grammar Schools), whatever one's views about that pamphlet's conclusions, it is clear from the comments of the serious press that those who have read it recognise it to be the best party document on the subject to appear since the war. By contrast, compare the performance of the Liberal economic spokesman in a recent party political broadcast who solemnly told listeners that the basic cause of the inflation in prices was "the fall in the value of money." This sort of thing is inconceivable from Labour leaders of to-day (and, to do them justice, from most Conservative leaders who are likely to get near the Treasury).

Whatever is wrong with the Labour policies it is not lack of intellectual quality, nor by contrast can it be intellectual quality and honesty which is attracting voters to the Liberals. Starting from that assumption, the conclusion I reach is that our troubles are coming from three causes: firstly, from a difficulty inherent in the natural history of any radical party; secondly, from certain other features of the factors which themselves yielded the high intellectual level; and thirdly, from one fundamental error in politico-economic analysis. In the remainder of the article I explain each of these in turn.

THE basic problem of the radical in any society is to find enough allies to be politically effective. Social psychologists have long been aware of a general personality trait which may be described loosely as "radicalism," to be contrasted with small-c "conservatism," varying from individual to individual and seeming to govern his complex of political attitudes. In other words, a person who holds radical views in one field, say penology, is likely to hold them in others, such as socialism-versus-capitalism, religion-versus-free thought, or sex. In addition, such a person is likely to be less ethnocentric than other persons, which means that he is less likely to be anti-Semitic, colour-prejudiced, or

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nationalistic (quiet pride in national achievement is not a form of ethnocentricity). All this, of course, accords pretty well with common observation, but the replies to questionnaires which have been devised to measure individual radicalism have shown something which is not quite so obvious—that most people are pretty conservative. It has been found that the only significant group of natural radicals in this country, apart from Communists and other eccentrics, are the middle-class people who vote Labour. This is the only group in which the "radical" reply was received from at least 50 per cent of the respondents to all of a wide range of questions covering race prejudice, nationalism, hanging, flogging, corporal punishment for children, religion, religious education, Sunday observance, divorce, trial marriage, abortion, and private property. But these people, who, needless to say, I regard as the backbone of the country, apparently represent no more than about one twentieth of the total electorate: a statistic whose implications remain virtually unaffected by the appearance of a minute group of radical Tories.

Of the conservative majority, the most conservative of all, as is well known, are the working-class Tories. They are in general the greatest floggers, hangers, beaters of children, fearers of Jews, repressers of sex, despisers of black men, and protectors of the rights of private property in the whole nation. However, the qualification, "in general" is important, for as we shall see, on some of these questions they appear to be outdone in nasty-mindedness by their fellow voters in the middle classes. (An example in point is colour prejudice: Mr. John Profumo knew what he was talking about when he lamented that colonial students coming to Britain seemed to make more friends among Labour people than among Conservatives.) Another thing about working-class Conservatives, perhaps the most interesting, is that they are apparently more religious than any other group, even more so than middle-class Conservatives. Religion apart, however, the attitudes displayed by working-class Conservatives are—let us face it—very much what one would expect from the facts of the working-class environment, especially before the war. Ethnocentricity is essentially a childish attribute, needing a positive educational stimulus to remove it: many manual workers, even today, have received insufficient education for the purpose. Similarly, crude methods of disciplining children are the natural response of overworked parents in overcrowded homes, and these in turn lead directly to crude retributory views about adult penology. The latter are reinforced by the fact that the disputed punishments (hanging and flogging) relate specifically to crimes against the person, to which the working classes are more exposed than to crimes against property.

It is not surprising that, given their environment, some sections of the working classes are ethnocentric and generally nasty-minded, and presumably there is inevitably a time lag between any improvement of the environment and change of attitudes. But it *is* surprising that the Labour Party should have persuaded so many others to adopt non-conservative attitudes towards a number of important issues, not all of which arise from direct economic class interest. It is also surprising (or would be to a man from Mars) to find that despite their educational and material advantages, the great bulk of the *middle classes* are little less nasty-minded than their working-class brethren. Not only do the middle classes overwhelmingly vote Conservative, but they are as a whole almost as hot on hanging, flogging, discriminating against Jews and black men as the Conservative working classes, and only a little less religious. Mr. H. J. Eysenck's* now ten-year-old data on these points are annually reconfirmed by the sounds which emanate from the conference of Conservative Women; also by the unpopularity which Conservative M.P.s who supported the abolition of capital punishment experienced in their constituencies: to have been an abolitionist is almost as bad as to have been an anti-Suezer, and to have been both together leads to Bournemouth West. Presumably the radical poten-

* H. J. Eysenck, *The Psychology of Politics*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. London, 1954.

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tialities of the middle-class material environment are suppressed by a cultural environment born of vested interest in the *status quo*: child-rearing practices and educational institutions are specifically developed to militate against radical tendencies which might otherwise endanger class survival. This all sounds rather crude and Marxian but I know of no other explanation, and presumably it is the characteristic of top-dog classes through the ages, though there is some indication that things are different in America.

THE combination of environmentally-produced conservatism in the lower orders, with culturally-produced conservatism in the upper, inevitably attenuates the possibility of effective radical politics. To succeed in becoming an effective force, radicals must persuade a frustrated class that its interests and aspirations can only be achieved by radical changes: hence the theory of the Party of Protest. This is precisely what the Labour Party did for the British working classes. Middle-class radicals, allied with powerful personalities of working-class origin who by fighting their way up the educational ladder rid themselves of some of their natural conservatism, persuaded a large section of the working-class electorate to support not only a programme of self-interested economical radicalism but also to repress their conservative attitudes in other fields as well. Thus by 1945, working-class socialists, besides voting Labour and being laudably irreligious, were also, at least in principle, less anti-Semitic and less anti-black than were Conservatives. Since then the colour question has become a more real issue in the home country, but nevertheless a considerable divergence of working-class feeling evidently persists, and I strongly suspect it is associated with political affiliation.

I do not know whether the lesser degree of race prejudice which apparently exists among working-class Labour voters is due to natural inclination or to moral propaganda. Is it that working people with a natural leaning to ideas of brotherly love (coloured people and Jews being included as brothers) are thereby attracted to the Labour Party, or is it that they are normal persons who, having identified themselves with what is in essence a humanistic cause, bravely suppress certain natural prejudices as a matter of duty? The point is vital, because it may be observed that on all other questions (except religion) on which at the time of asking there was no official or semi-official Labour Party line, working-class socialists exhibited attitudes which were very much nearer to those of working- and middle-class Conservatives than of middle-class socialists. Thus, on enquiry, they proved as keen on hanging as any group, and only a little less keen on flogging than working-class Conservatives (who were nearly 100 per cent solid on this issue). They were conservative about sex and only 40 per cent of them did not agree that sparing the rod spoils the child. Significantly (cf. Mr. Worsthorne's references to irresponsibility), unlike middle-class socialists, only a small fraction agreed that in an ideal society private property should be abolished and all goods held in common. Finally, of great practical importance—although, as we have seen, they suffered less from race prejudice—they had by no means dropped all the ethnocentric attitudes natural to the environment; the majority believed that war was inherent in human nature, were anti-internationalist, and refused to accept that in the modern world patriotism was a force which could sometimes work against peace. These findings are confirmed by common observation and by the Labour Party's own misfortunes over Suez and Cyprus.

In short, the attitudes of the working-class socialist supporters are strained, their natural pattern of intercorrelations is distorted, and this voter is constantly being led to take up radical positions which run counter to his instincts: no doubt most radical parties of any size are in a like situation. I take it that this observation is not original, but what I have not seen pointed out explicitly are the implications for a radical party which, having achieved one set of objectives, is moving to develop new ones.

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For, in effect, a radical party can, and does, overcome the internal contradictions of its political psychology by getting the majority of its supporters into a state of mind where voting for the party in question no longer seems a particularly radical act. The traditional ideas of the party take on a conservative aura. This is not the same as saying, as has sometimes been said, that voting Labour becomes an automatic response, almost akin to a conditioned reflex. If that were the (undesirable) state of affairs there would be no problem: the conditioned voter would continue marking his X on the ballot long after the policies offered him had changed. In practice, the simulated conservatism by which a radical party achieves support is far from automatic. The voters in question (unless they be members of the Celtic fringe) are fairly easily recaptured by their deeper natural conservatism and may fairly quickly withdraw support from the "traditional" radical policies if the latter lose relevance. Unfortunately, this having happened, they will be just as slow as ever to accept new radical policies. The difficulty is reinforced by the dependence of British political parties on the activist function of their voluntary rank and file workers (at least, up to the coming of television). Normally, any new thinking from the party's élite must first be swallowed by the activists before it has much hope with the public at large. And the activists, although no doubt more radically-minded than ordinary voters, are certainly not the sort of people who swallow new ideas overnight. In consequence, even were the Labour Party's contemporary new thought aimed right on the target, wherever that might be, one could hardly expect quick results. No doubt ideas to-day spread more quickly than they used to, but they still do not spread so quickly that you can sell modern sociology, *à la Crosland*, to a major political party merely by publishing a few well-written books and pamphlets. This is what I meant by saying that part of Labour's present difficulties arise from an inevitable feature in the natural history of radical parties.

A SECOND implication of the political psychology of radical parties is that new ideas must be presented to those whose interests they are intended to serve in a form capable of arousing emotional impulses strong enough to overcome the natural conservatism of the majority. In the 1935–55 period, the emotional appeal of the Labour Party to the working classes derived from no more than the idea that here for the first time was a political party which was on their side, rather than on the other side. There was no need to "stir up class feeling," the feeling was already there (on both sides) but Labour was the first party to give public recognition to the fact—the first to deny the conspiracy of silence by means of which, like the sexual ethic of the Victorians, a vicious system was preserved.

Now, on this subject, the doctrine of Labour's new thinking takes the sophisticated if convincing line that the greater part of the desired economic transformation of capitalism has been achieved, but that the social structure has remained largely unchanged and sharply conflicts with the new economic structure. The redundant social stratification results not only in a good deal of residual personal inequality of economic opportunity but also in "tension" and industrial unrest. Class tension, rather than class exploitation, is the problem of our time. This doctrine, although I have major reservations about the character and extent of the supposed economic transformation, I accept as a basic truth. (I am mainly concerned with injustice; the talk of "tension" not only sounds middle class, but is—it sounds as though were the situation not inefficient and embarrassing, one would have little objection to it.) There is certainly considerable evidence that the manual working classes, not unreasonably, desire that their newly-gained economic advantages should be matched by a greater degree of social recognition. Beyond this, however, the evidence is more ambiguous. Some indications, but not many, suggest the primary aim is to ape the pettier aspects of petty bourgeois culture, as suggested in the writings of Mr. Charles Curran and, in effect,

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by Mr. Worsthorne. No doubt, as the stereotype of the immobile, non-acquisitive, British working man fades from reality, his overtime-eager, bonus-seeking successor seeks social as well as material gains from his efforts. But there are also indications of something rather different—a desire that the original working-class culture shall itself be recognised by society, for better or for worse. If this is correct we are faced with an attractive historical novelty: people who plan to remain manual workers—*i.e.*, people who are not striving particularly hard to climb ladders—while demanding social upgrading for the culture associated with their end of the ladder.

The old economic bitterness against the middle classes has largely disappeared, but with this has come an increasing sensitivity to anything which implies social superiority in the culture of middle and upper classes. Thus, B.B.C. television seems to be suffering from having allowed itself to get caught in the crossfire of cultural class war. In some cases, normal dislike of being talked down to has heightened into an irrational nihilistic opposition to any kind of job well done, be it a television programme or a political argument. It is precisely at this point that I fear Labour has got into trouble. The high intellectual quality of its new thought is inevitably associated with University-educated upper middle-class status in the individuals who created and have attempted to propagate it. In consequence, although these creators passionately disapprove of social stratification, they—*i.e.*, we—express themselves in middle-class language. We have palpably failed to communicate. We have failed to express ourselves in terms of practical contemporary working-class social experience.

HERE it is appropriate to consider for a moment the arguments of Mr. Worsthorne. He, it will be remembered, diagnosed the fundamental contemporary working-class aspiration as social acceptance into the non-intellectual fields of bourgeois culture. But he went on to suggest that there was also developing a considerable attitude of cultural and political passivity. The higher things in modern life had become so complicated that nobody but an élite could understand them: the intellectual gap between leaders and led had suddenly widened. "In an age of inter-continental ballistic missiles, who thinks he understands strategy?" he asked. (More people, perhaps, than one might imagine, but that is by the way.) Much of his argument, it seemed to me, was based on a confusion of time-scale. The schoolboy in the article who thought he could explain the world with the aid of an apple, was not Mr. Worsthorne's grandfather, but Mr. Worsthorne himself. The idea that contemporary art and technology has recently taken a jump and become disproportionately more esoteric is an illusion based on a romantic misinterpretation of the past, fostered, I suspect, by the poor level of scientific education prevailing among the intelligentsia. Art and technology have been becoming progressively more sophisticated since the beginning of the modern age, and full comprehension of each branch has always been confined to separate, tiny minorities. But the spread of education is part of the process of advancement: it is more than a truism that the advanced technology of yesterday, suitably simplified, becomes the common knowledge of to-day. We can all explain, in a manner, the workings of a steam engine to our children, and eventually we shall be able to explain, in a manner, the working of a nuclear reactor. Yet none of us, other than professional physicists, can really expect to be able to explain the theory of the behaviour of gases in a cylinder any more than quantum mechanics.

Nevertheless, there is unmistakable evidence of the development of some degree of cultural and political apathy in "the masses" of post 1950. Comfortable material standards, the intense, contented life of the unextended family on the housing estate, all fed by the new opium of the people, have definitely done something, even if it is difficult to say exactly what. It may well be that the sponsors of commercial television struck an even more far-reaching blow against political democracy than has yet been realised. It is a

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blow which must be countered somehow. I am reminded of a recent conversation in Cambridge when a group of people were discussing the discovery that rats, if their brains are electrically stimulated in a certain way, appear happy and contented; more precisely, they are prepared to learn tricks in order to be rewarded by a further dose of the stimulus. In the middle of this conversation Oliver Zangwill, the Professor of Experimental Psychology, surprised the company by saying: "I have seen those rats. They did not seem to me to look like happy rats. I think they were not happy, but addicted." Is this a good analogy to the present situation of that half of the working classes who, according to Mr. Geoffrey Gorer, are now more or less glued in front of their television sets?

People "want" what they are persuaded to want. If you offer them a hypnotic drug, they will soon want it more than anything else. But drug addicts also "want," in a deeper sense, to escape. They would like to be saved, but the task of a saviour is peculiarly difficult. If he threatens to withdraw the drug, he will be killed stone dead. If on the other hand he merely offers alternative, more edifying delights, he will probably be ignored. Yet somehow, if the Labour Party can find means for steering people into the way of a more positive cultural exploitation of their new environment—then I believe it will earn gratitude and loyalty which would last a generation. Furthermore, as in 1945, it would have done more good to our society than a hundred years of conventional politics. (Do not let anybody imagine that I am arguing that the "old days" were better: if one has to choose between unemployment and poverty on the one hand and prosperity and television, with consequent embarrassments for the Labour Party, on the other . . . need one answer?) We know that the young people lead a more positive, if apolitical, social life: it is their parents who have been most strongly doped. We also know that many young people are suffering from considerable frustration (as expressed in Teddy Boy nihilism) in consequence of cultural castration by the eleven-plus. How are the products of the secondary modern classes of 1945–55 going to vote in 1960, if at all? Personally I have not the faintest idea, but have any of my friends in the Labour Party either?

So much for amateur sociology. I now turn to my third point, the error in politico-economic analysis. I believe Labour's new thinking has seriously misinterpreted the changes which have taken place in capitalism since before the war. The error led to the conclusion that further major changes in the structure of our economic institutions were unwanted and unnecessary (particularly the traditional socialist sort of changes, *i.e.*, nationalisation—there I agree), and its effects run through nearly every Labour policy statement. It is a sophisticated error which has been concealed in debate by the crudeness of the arguments of the traditionalist left wing (who simply assert that little or nothing has changed). And since the arguments are complicated, they cannot easily be expressed in electoral pabulum. Nevertheless I am satisfied that, had not the error been made, the Labour Party would in recent years have been able to present an altogether more confident and convincing impression to the public over the whole range of its policy.

The argument in dispute runs as follows. Traditional or "Marxist" capitalism was based on an intimate connection between personal ownership of industrial assets and their control. In consequence, decisions relating to the operation and development of such assets were motivated almost exclusively by the desire and need for profits, and were subjected to the minimum of external social restriction: the classical capitalist owed legal duty to no one but himself, none to his employees and little to the state. The propertyless proletarian, and indeed society as a whole, were both, for better or for worse, almost entirely at the capitalist's economic mercy. This feeble economic bargaining position was maintained by the existence of a reserve pool of unemployed, or under-employed labourers, whose magnitude varied but was never zero. Chronic under-employment not only created

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a permanent buyer's market for labour, but also a severe maldistribution of income within the working class, some living significantly above subsistence while others, on the whole a minority, suffered grinding poverty. The fear of being forced into poverty preserved a high degree of industrial discipline among the employed majority, even after they had become organised in trade unions.

The argument implies that this picture was transformed by two factors. The first was the development of the public joint stock company as a predominant form of organisation in large-scale industry. In these institutions, originally conceived to improve the flow of capital funds into industry, the increasingly widely-dispersed shareholders steadily abdicated their controlling function in favour of directors and salaried managers. The motivation of decision-taking in such organisations, it is argued, must be much more complex than the crude profit maximisation of the classical capitalist—apart from paternalistic sensations of responsibility towards employees and society, the new controllers of industry could be expected to feel strong desires for the enhanced personal status and remuneration which is associated with employment in a successful and expanding firm. At first sight, the latter differs little in effect from that of the orthodox profit motive, since profits remain the chief objective index of success and provide a high proportion of the capital funds required for expansion. But on further consideration it can be seen that, as compared with the old form of organisation, in the modern corporation many important decisions will be different biased—in particular, of course, the decision as to what proportion of current profits should be ploughed back for development.

The second factor in the postulated transformation of capitalism consisted in the acquisition of political power by the working class, dating from 1940. This new-found political power was used to revolutionise the economic bargaining position of the wage-earner by causing the government to pursue fiscal and monetary policies which guaranteed the maintenance of full employment and, through social services, underpinned personal economic security. In addition, the spirit of the times further modified the ethic of the joint stock company in the direction of more overt acceptance of public responsibility and some degree of social restriction on its autonomy. The argument implies that all these changes have jelled, that is have become generally accepted as part of the natural order of contemporary economic society. Capitalism, it is said, is barely recognisable as its former self; indeed, when applied to the present system, the very word is a misnomer.

PERSONALLY, I do not believe that the changes described above have jelled, or could ever jell unless in some way or another they were taken further. And I now believe that one of the primary symptoms of the unjelled condition is the chronic price-inflation which has been experienced in almost all the countries where similar developments have occurred. In order to explain this it is necessary to consider the history of capitalism in the framework of a theory of economic growth. In the first stage of any economic growth, whether capitalistically organised or communistically organised, the standard of living of the greater part of the working population must be held constant or even reduced. Most of the additional surplus of production over subsistence requirements created at each round of growth (a "round" consisting of a finite dose of technical innovation, capital accumulation, and consequent increase in output per worker) must immediately be ploughed back to provide the capital necessary for the next round. If not, the process of growth will soon peter out for lack of capital replenishments. In the successful capitalist cases the trick is done by institutional arrangements which ensure that the surplus accrues to a small number of abstemious, industrially-minded proprietors who continue to plough back profits long after the point is reached where rational behaviour would dictate a spending spree. As everyone knows, this beneficent irrationality is a speciality of the

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Protestant Christian culture of North-west Europe and North America. In the Communist arrangement, the function of the protestant capitalist is taken over by the state, and the parallel to the Protestant Ethic is to be found in the behaviour of a ruling salariat which, though bureaucratic and tyrannical, shows genuine devotion to the cause of national material progress, and whose ideology represses the temptation to divert the emerging economic surplus to personal indulgence. (Cf. *e.g.*, the behaviour of the Eastern potentate or south European landowner). In either case, capitalist or communist, the pressure of capital accumulation steadily draws labour from agriculture into industry and so long as this source of supply, combined with the natural growth of population, remains open, the rising demand for labour by capitalists or commissars will not drive up wages. A spanner can be thrown into the works, however, if the workers combine into collective bargaining organisations, because by that means they may be able to insist on higher wages even while a substantial reserve supply of labour remains unexploited. Hence, as in both Russia and China to-day, and in Britain in the early 19th century, trade union organisation was prevented by political repression.

It will be observed that since output per worker is increasing, but real wages per worker are not, in the stage of development described (which in Britain lasted some 70 years) the *proportion* of the total value of output accruing to the wage earners—the so-called "share of labour in the national income"—must continually be falling. The situation may be likened to that of two persons (in reality two groups of persons) drinking from a jug of beer. Drinker A (the employees) receives a ration which, measured in pints, is constant. Drinker B (the capitalists) takes the rest, but he uses his ration in a mysterious process which causes the total contents of the jug subsequently to increase. Since at each successive round of drinking, A still receives a constant glass, the whole of the increment accrues to B and the latter's proportionate share in the national income increases while that of A declines.

After a time a stage is reached at which it becomes possible to maintain a decent rate of growth with a constant, rather than increasing, share for B. Real wages per worker can be permitted to rise and, with trade union organisation made legal and the supply of labour from agriculture slowing up, real wages do rise. We thus reach a second stage of capitalism. Its mechanics are not obvious and modern academic theory has only recently begun to get down to their analysis. For at first sight it would appear that if wages are rising *pari passu* with productivity (so that the average gross profit margin charged on goods sold remains a constant percentage of labour costs) and if productivity is being raised by the normal process of mechanisation (*i.e.*, by using increasing quantities of capital per worker employed), the average rate of profit obtainable on industrial investments must fall. If the rate of profit falls continually, it must eventually reach a level sufficiently low to damp the ardour of even the most enthusiastic devotee of the Protestant Ethic, hence bringing growth to a halt. (That, in effect, was the theoretical justification for Marxian pessimism.) But we now know that, historically, things turned out differently. Since 1870, more or less steady rates of economic growth, associated with more or less constant average rates of profit, have been characteristic in numerous cases. Some aspects of the explanation remain in dispute, but its broad outlines can be put as follows. Economic progress involves regular improvement in the design of machines and indeed of all capital instruments. At each round of progress it is possible to invent machines which provide increases in output per worker proportionately no smaller than the increase in the cost of capital per worker. The value of capital employed per unit of output is therefore unchanged. Hence, by simple arithmetic, if the gross profit margin does not fall neither does the rate of profit earned on capital. On this basis fruitful economic progress can be maintained indefinitely—a fundamental feature of the second stage of capitalism.

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THE second stage lasted until 1940. Before that, in the later sub-stages, the public joint stock company proved an ideal form of organisation and the development of effective political organisation by the working class was an inevitable concomitant. But chronic unemployment, insecurity, and glaring social injustice remained integral features of the system; although the poor did not get poorer and indeed got richer, so also did the rich, and the *relative* size of the gap between the two nations continued undiminished. And in Britain, in contrast to the United States, the working classes received in exchange the benefits of a rate of growth of real wages which was by any standard pretty mingy. Hence, the working classes, supported by a minority of conscience-stricken middle-class radicals, finally took political power to change the system, partly by socialisation but mainly by general economic policy as already described. Since then, the conservative middle-class intelligentsia (both Conservative and Liberal) has never tired of pointing out that in the old system unemployment performed what were for that system vital functions—the prevention of inflation and the maintenance of industrial discipline—for which no substitutes have yet been found. Being middle class and conservative-minded, most of the critics were mainly interested in the proposition as an argument for putting the clock back. Socialists, on the other hand, have failed to investigate the deeper causes of the problem. For note that, in the economic "model" of the second stage of capitalism described above, although the speed of growth and the rate of profit were constant, nothing was said about the absolute level of these rates: a motorist cannot defend himself against a charge of speeding by proving that he was not accelerating. Obviously in such a system the rates of profit and of growth are closely associated, profits being the major source of funds for capital development. Conversely, other things being equal, the lower the share of wages, the higher the rate of growth (since lower wages mean higher profits) but this does not mean that you could always at any one moment step up the rate of growth by arbitrarily reducing wages: the position is much more complicated. It can safely be said, however, that whoever or whatever determined the distribution of the national income and its rate of growth, it was not the wage-earner, functioning either individually or collectively. Wage and salary earners were strong enough to ensure that at whatever rate the national income grew, they obtained a constant share, but they were unable to determine the instantaneous level of that share; that is, in the long run they could prevent their share from falling, but could not make it rise. At any one moment the carve-up of the national income between profits and investment on the one hand and wages and consumption on the other was determined (somehow) by the capitalist sector alone. In the jug-of-beer analogy, although drinker A now in the long run received a constant proportion of the contents, it was still true that at each round he was largely in the position of accepting a residuum.

In the post-war world, drinker B has come perforce to be closely associated with the government. Not only does the government heavily influence through fiscal policy the size of the funds available for private investment, but also the government itself drinks large quantities of beer for purposes such as public investment and defence. In principle, therefore, if the electorate can be said to control the government, they control in turn the decision as to what proportion of current national income shall be devoted to defence and investment. If conditions were as prewar, that would largely be the end of the matter. But with full employment it is no longer the case that the wage and salary earners remain passive in this matter at the economic level. The employee's bargaining power in the labour market is now peculiarly strong because he has, of course, retained the trade union organisation and collective bargaining practices he originally built up to counter some of the weaknesses inherent in his old situation. Drinker A now has considerable capacity to influence directly the size of his own dip in the jug: if he does not

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like what is offered he can fight back with wage pressure.

There is, of course, no need for consistency between what implicitly he votes for at the political level, and how he behaves at the economic level. He may vote for a government committed to heavy defence expenditure and high investment programmes and yet exert wage pressure aiming at a share of the national product for consumption which is quite inconsistent with these objectives. Moreover, most of the decisions in question have not in practice been subjected to the democratic process, they have never become electoral issues and no "mandate" seems to be required, for example, to make a decision to halve the rate of economic growth in the interest of military security. (Mr. Worsthorne would say that this is because the issues are too complicated; I say they can usually be resolved into quite simple terms, but that governments have refused to face up to them.)

Governments, of course, are not prepared in their turn to accept a passive rôle. They believe that in taxation they have a weapon sufficiently powerful—in effect, a substitute for pre-war unemployment—to enable them to pre-empt whatever proportion of national resources they require. But under full employment the pull of taxation can always be resisted by the counter-pull of rising pre-tax incomes: the government may win in the end, but only at the expense of an unhealthy inflationary conflict with the consumer. Also, the government has not really been winning, since defence expenditure has been maintained, not by reducing consumption, but by reducing investment.

I BELIEVE the foregoing to represent the fundamental framework on which contemporary discussion of the problem of inflation ought to be based. In such discussion, one line of reasoning suggests that if the redundant institution of collective bargaining were abandoned, the government, by means of careful fiscal and monetary policy, could within reasonable limits carve the national cake (jug of beer) in almost any way desired. This argument is probably correct: it is the spread of so-called "wage-drift" (bonus payments, overtime earnings, and so forth) from expanding firms and industries to firms and industries which are not expanding and whose productivity is in consequence not increasing, which is at the bottom of wage-inflation. Without collective bargaining, this spreading could not occur so easily. Since, however, the immediate voluntary relinquishment of collective bargaining rights won over years of struggle is hardly politically conceivable, the idea is for the time being academic. Instead, much interest has been attracted to schemes which may loosely be described as "national wages policy"—schemes for a political agreement between government and both sides of industry to damp down the rise in wages by some form of general co-ordination. Such schemes are attractive and I believe that some such could, in principle, be made to work provided the government recognised its responsibility not to attempt to impose on the population unrealistic allocations between consumption and non-consumption, and provided both sides of industry recognised that determinate rates of economic growth require determinate shares between profits and wages in total output. Trade union leaders and industrialists are currently showing increasing appreciation of these possibilities, and the Labour Party indeed is pledged to attempt to reach an agreement—vague in outline but definite in intent—immediately after taking office. Nevertheless it is still difficult to be optimistic about the prospects. Certainly the electorate seems sceptical. If the electorate believed a Labour government could carry off an effective scheme for ending inflation, surely the Gallup polls would look different.

I believe the unfavourable outlook is due basically to the fact that the implied transformation of capitalism is still incomplete, but I do not—repeat, not—believe that we must neither nationalise the whole of industry nor go back to the old capitalism. The virtual absence of inflation in Communist countries is attributable not just to the universal socialisation of industry, but to the combination of socialism with the absence of effec-

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tive trade unions and collective bargaining, *i.e.*, in effect to political repression. (It is reported that an almost immediate consequence of the "thaw" in Poland has been a rapid rise in prices, a characteristic sign of social democracy.) In a *democratic* socialist state, if all industries were nationalised, the workers' organisations would properly insist on retaining collective bargaining in order to protect their members against excessive economic demands by the state, just as they do now in the nationalised industries of the U.K. Otherwise, they would argue, they would be just as much at the economic mercy of the state as they were of the former capitalists. Of course, in saying this, they would not strictly be correct, because at least in principle their members would have power of redress through the ballot box: nevertheless, in face of orthodox-type nationalisation, trade unionists would almost certainly refuse to accept that view of the situation. The evolution of non-totalitarian, or "Western" economic organisation therefore appears to have reached an *impasse*, and yet is unable happily to remain stationary.

In attempting the ambitious task of suggesting a new way through the block, it has recently occurred to me that socialists may have seriously underrated the potentialities of reforming the legal character of the public joint stock company. The Liberals talk vaguely of industrial co-ownership and some interesting writers have published specific suggestions, but such proposals have so far struck no deep chord of politico-economic reality. Yet the Liberals' instinct may nevertheless have found a genuine clue, though not I think the solution of the problem. We all agree that the present ethical and legal character of the public joint stock company is peculiar. If it is not managed primarily for the benefit of its legal owners, the shareholders, for whose benefit is it managed? A reasonable answer is to say that it is primarily managed for the benefit of its employees, particularly its salaried employees whose efforts determine its destinies. One might almost say that the directors of a successful firm compare the advantages of higher immediate salaries for the employees with those of higher profits and hence faster growth of the firm's future output and sales—much as a classical capitalist comparing the merits of personal consumption and saving. In practice, however, salaries being rather sticky, the decision will always tend to be biased in favour of growth. Hence from this point of view the public joint stock company is a most efficient instrument of economic dynamism, and public joint stock companies in the British economy are responsible for a disproportionate share of the total amount of growth which occurs. There are, of course, rapidly growing private joint stock companies, most on the way to becoming public, but many other family businesses are content to stagnate, their owner controllers having decided deliberately on this course.

Given that growth is the game, what are the rules? What is the framework of legal, economic, and ethical restraints within which the managers of public joint stock companies make their decisions? The legal and economic restraints we know. I say the ethos derives directly from the property-control link of traditional capitalism. The only unambiguous obligation of the directors remains the obligation to shareholders: all others, such as to employees or public, however strongly felt, remain vague and undefined. This fact cannot but enormously influence the psychological attitude of everyone in contact with these organisations, whether as employee, customer, voter, or civil servant. There is still a smell of property about them, or, if a less pejorative description is preferred, they retain much of the spirit of traditional capitalism. Indeed one might almost say that boards of directors and managers transfer the sensations of ownership from the shareholders to themselves. They certainly feel a strong responsibility towards the other employees and to the public, as does any decent ordinary industrial property-owner, but they believe nevertheless that they have the exclusive right to decide how and how far such obligations should be observed. Any extraneous influence is "unnatural" intervention: if in the course

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of furthering full employment the government should happen to create conditions which make one course of action more profitable than another, they will take it; they are also open to moral suasion; but it is rare for a firm to take the less profitable of two alternative courses simply on account of public interest.

On the other side, the public, including the socialist public, still regards the public company as a private-property institution; indeed few know or care which companies are public and which are private, or for that matter what is the difference between them. It is accepted at law and by public opinion that any "private" firm, including any public joint stock company, has the right to preserve a high degree of secrecy about its activities: the accounts required by the Companies Act are intended to protect shareholders, not the public at large. Interesting statistics of production, productivity, wages, and profit margins which are collected for government purposes are restricted by rigid legal provisions from public disclosure, for fear they might fall into the hands of competitors. If such statistics were published one company might notice that another was more efficient than they, and be spurred to make improvements; but this, however good for the nation, would be bad for business. A more emphatic illustration may be found in the virtual impossibility of public criticism of an individual company, even if the comment is fair and the facts quoted are correct. I may ruin an author by publishing a harsh review of his first book; newspapers may demoralise the staff of nationalised industries by nagging criticism; but no editor in the country will publish any criticism, however justified, of, for example, the shocking post-war economic record of individual firms in the cotton industry or of seriously bad features of some new car models. We all agree that by and large private enterprise does an excellent technical job of work, but nobody believes its products are always perfect. It is said that editors fear libel actions, but many of them take calculated risks in libelling individual persons when it suits them. Nor do I accept the view that slavish pandering to the interests of advertisers is to blame. No, surely the real explanation of the phenomenon is that people still feel there would be something morally wrong in adversely criticising the products of a private enterprise firm; they feel that if you damage a firm's sales, you damage property: gallant exceptions like the magazine *Which* merely prove the rule.

In short, public joint stock companies, most of which have grown out of private joint stock companies, are institutions which have lost certain of the practical features of traditional capitalism, but have retained much of the ethic. Yet although the prevailing capitalist ethic is accepted, I do not think society is happy with it. I believe measures for legal completion of the capitalist evolution would satisfy a real desire and, provided they did not mean conventional "nationalisation," would be welcomed widely. But I do not think employees are much interested in "owning"—in the strict legal sense—the machinery and other assets with which they work, *i.e.*, I do not think there is much social reality in plans for industrial "co-ownership." Indeed, our thought is still obsessed by the conception of ownership: when an industry is nationalised conventionally, we still hear of its being taken into state or popular "ownership," and even the assets of Co-operative Societies are, as far as I can see, owned by their members in the sense that capital profits can, in effect, be distributed as "divi." Ownership is a conception which is suitable for toothbrushes and the like, but it is grossly anachronistic in modern large-scale industry. Society to-day requires a form of industrial organisation which has the technical and managerial advantages of the public joint stock company, but whose assets are *owned* by no body, no person, and no government.

It is a fallacy to imagine that things have to be owned: who owns the assets of an Oxbridge College, or of Dr. Barnardo's Homes? The educational and financial policy of my college—technically we are a "Charity"—is almost entirely controlled by the Fellows, and we annually vote ourselves a

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"dividend" out of college income. But see what would happen if we tried to sell King's College Chapel to an American millionaire in order to distribute among ourselves the proceeds! I seriously see no reason why it should not be perfectly possible to organise industry on an analogous basis, provided that Charters or Articles of Association or what have you put a statutory bar to dissipation of the assets (which is not the same thing as bar on change of form). Such organisations could borrow from the public on a fixed-interest basis, but the bonds they issued would carry no voting rights: I do not think that under modern conditions this would make a serious difference to the supply of risk capital, particularly if the new form became the prevailing form of organisation, so that there was little other outlet for funds. All profits after payment of interest would be ploughed back and all capital gains would remain for ever undistributed: the results could hardly but be dynamic: there are many irrational fears of "auto-financing," but as it must have the effect of concentrating economic growth in the industries and firms where the prospective return on capital is highest, I have never really been able to understand them.

ANY attempt to fill out the detail in such an idea is likely to be jumped on for "blueprintism" and *naïveté*. I will therefore content myself with asserting that it is not at all difficult to think out a simple and workable legal structure for industrial enterprises analagous to "charities"—a board of directors elected by a governing body consisting largely of employees (but not necessarily including all the employees) would carry out much the same functions as boards of directors in public companies at present. This might lead to some modification in the social character of boards, but would be unlikely to militate against efficiency: the incentive for the governing body to elect an efficient board would lie in the fact that employees are the first to suffer if a firm fails. Similarly, the conflict between higher remuneration and higher profits would be restrained by the employees' own interest in the firm's growth, and by their knowledge that in a competitive world a stagnating enterprise soon becomes a declining one. In short, why not rationalise the managerial revolution? Personally, I always felt the managerial revolution was an overrated bogey, but be that as it may, it is very arguable that the control exercised by shareholders over the boards of most public companies is now so weak that almost any new legal arrangement must reduce, rather than increase, the dangers of managerial autonomy in our society.

Nor is it difficult to think of simple but effective ways of initiating the necessary changes. Assuming that legislation arbitrarily amending the articles of all public companies is out of the question (although the implications of such a measure would be less shockingly radical than might be supposed), a satisfactory Fabian procedure would be to pass enabling legislation for the new form of organisation and then to offer tax concessions designed to induce existing companies to convert to the new form voluntarily. Logically, the profits of such bodies should be free of income tax entirely, since, like the income of existing "charities," their profits would belong to no one. But the state has come to rely so heavily on company taxation as a convenient method of raising revenue with the minimum of damage to personal incentive that it would be quite out of the question to carry things to their logical conclusion in that particular respect. However, it is possible to compute a measure of tax concession which would provide a strong incentive to conversion—*e.g.*, increasing the funds free for net reinvestment in the average firm by some 50 per cent—whose fiscal implications would nevertheless be manageable. On this or some similar basis I believe a good rate of voluntary conversion could be achieved without undue difficulty.

I do not suggest that if the foregoing became socialist policy, the proletariat would rush out from their television parlours into the polling booths, or that, the day the legislation was passed, the unions would renounce collective bargaining. But I do suggest that the industrial atmosphere, in a

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society where the type of organisation described was becoming predominant, would be such as in the short run considerably to enhance the chances of success of a national wages policy kind of scheme, and in the long run to encourage the unions to concentrate on firm-by-firm, in contrast to industry-wide bargaining. In effect the wage-bargaining function would relate only to members without voting rights; for members with voting rights, a union's function, apart from general welfare, would consist in providing advice as to how their votes should be employed. Some would say these ideas are grossly optimistic. It is very arguable, for example, that the function of contemporary trade unions and other employee organisations is in reality to obtain the maximum share of the national income for its members at the expense of the members of other unions, rather than at the expense of profits; if so, whatever the form of industrial organisation, unions would continue to function with inflationary effect. But the original conception of a union was to fight for wages against profits, and this new anti-social, pressure-group type of function is really no more than another example of the unfortunate results of the incomplete transformation of capitalism. The only hope lies in attempting to go forward, and to create a society where the old type of wage-bargaining not only is, but can be seen to be, redundant. It is, however, essential to emphasise that the institutional structure must be such as genuinely to give equal ultimate power to different grades of employees; otherwise unions of manual workers will reasonably insist on the right to push the claims of wages at the expense of salaries, and *vice versa*.

A POLICY of the kind I have outlined would have far-reaching effects on nearly every other aspect of socialist thought. With, to borrow a phrase from Mr. C. A. R. Crosland, a non-capital-gains-distributing type of organisation predominant in industry Labour would no longer need to consider resorting to such awkward devices as dividend control, capital gains taxation, or state purchase of equity shares in private industry. The state would, however, have no less and no more power to exert overall planning control on "private" industry than it would under any existing Labour proposals. The rate of accumulation of large private fortunes would be considerably reduced, since, as is well known, these accumulations largely arise in practice not from personal abstinence but from capital gains in industrial enterprise. Finally, the way would be clear for a long overdue rapprochement between Labour and the managerial class, whose attachment to the Conservative cause is based on social and ideological loyalties rather than a genuine economic interest in the traditional forms of capitalism. We would offer the prospect of a true rationalisation of the relationship between industry and society—offer, in effect, a relationship which completes the capitalist transformation without the bogey of state monopoly.

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Frank Littler

Slip-horns in the Wash-house

Jazz Appreciation in the 'Thirties

...Duke Ellington and his band, which has started a definite cult. The primitive raw quality of his playing seems to have found an answering chord in the mentality of youth.

LADY SIBELL LYGON, 1933

...the use of a strange, growling voice that brought him far closer to the Hairy Ape than to any of God's Chillun. He seemed to take a deliberate delight in the shedding of any remnants of human dignity and in simulating the crouching and roaring of some jungle monster. ...Our star-attraction obviously had none of the detested grey matter in the detested brain; he was fulfilling all the requisites of Lawrentian anatomy; his consciousness was obviously in the abdomen or lower....As I watched this performance I began, for the first time in my life, to understand the feelings of an American Southerner, whose racial antipathies had previously seemed so childish and perverse....Let us have no more drivelling praise of "hot numbers" propelled by orgiastic coons on the ground that they are a lovely essay in primitive humanity.

IVOR BROWN, 1934

At the same point in each number she rolled her eyes in ecstasy and sang some such cabalistic phrase as "I-dee-ho," and there was no question but that the word "Harlem" was distinctly audible.

"ATTICUS," 1936

JAZZ writing is usually characterised by so many proper names that every line of it appears as a sort of typographical cordillera, and what begins as an essay soon develops into a roll-call. Readers must be prepared for the old, familiar impression in the following notes. But not, this time, for the old, familiar reason—that jazz will always depend on solo improvisation. The subject here is not jazz performance but jazz appreciation. Yet even a survey of this adjacent, less trampled field demands so many nominal illustrations that all I can promise in the way of relief will be an absence of phone numbers.

When the senior jazz fan—there is a distinction between the terms "jazz fan" and "music lover" that still escapes me—looks around at the Acceptance World of 1958, his memories of the Christopher Stone Age are apt to be sardonic. A good period to start with would be 1932. In that year the arrival of Louis Armstrong in Britain went unreported by any national newspaper. The B.B.C. having hastily—but considerately—arranged a relay of his Palladium performance, the *Daily Mail* chose this item to headline its radio column. The headline was appetising, but marked by a curious omission. It failed to mention the virtuoso's name, appearing simply as: "New Rhythm Band on Radio." The same newspaper recently showed us Armstrong merely talking to Group-Captain Peter Townsend, an encounter, though it took place in Buenos Aires, judged newsworthy enough for a sizeable photograph. In 1932 Armstrong was 32 years old and had been in and out of the recording studios for nine years continuously. Yet his reputation was only a little higher in the United States. According to John Hammond, Jr., then the *Melody Maker*'s American correspondent, no New York daily carried any reference to his return from that first European visit. Jazzmen were simply not news. When Bix Beiderbecke had died a year or two earlier, Walter Winchell, in the Eastern dailies, had been his only elegist.

It would be difficult to cite any parallel—in an age of advanced communications—to the appalling isolation in which collectors of those days indulged their taste. Two monthly magazines, and such random tidings as found their way into Edgar Jackson's space in *The Gramophone*, were the only valid sources of information. It is doubtful whether the cats really wanted jazz

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to be popular, holding the intuitive conviction that vulgarisation would ruin it. But complete ignorance of the *doings* of its leading exponents was a frustration the post-war collector cannot imagine. If, for example, an issue of the *Melody Maker* dated the first of the month had reported an eminent jazzman seriously ill, readers would have had to wait until the first of the following month to know whether he was still alive. It was not practicable to ring up the editor's office from some intellectual Outer Mongolia. The provincial fan, indeed, was handicapped by much more than his distance from Long Acre. In the larger cities there were reasonably well-stocked gramophone shops, and it was possible to learn *something*, to meet a kindred spirit or two (perhaps behind the counter) in Glasgow, Birmingham, or Liverpool. Smaller towns yielded nothing. And this isolation actually determined, to some extent, the quality of the connoisseur's collection. He could not, in a small provincial store, hear a few records before making his choice. There would not be one hot record in the place. Unless, therefore, he was equipped to travel (and picture his plight if he lived in Whitehaven or Aberystwyth), his only course was to order a specified disc and hope that when it arrived it justified "Mike's" review. If he did go shopping in the nearest city it was a problem to decide how much aural free-loading he could do before finally putting down his precious half-crown for one record. Other facilities for merely hearing jazz were minimal. In those days there were no hot records on the air, except for an odd item from Mr. Stone, who usually made no bones about his distaste for having to offer this solatium.

THE ONE thing, then, that did *not* attract young men to quality jazz was advertising. The music was not boosted, sales-promoted, mass-communicated, or public-related. It is safe to say that every collector in the British Isles or on the Continent was a reader of either the *Melody Maker* or *Rhythm*, and usually of both. Further, that he would have been introduced to these periodicals after hearing radio dance music. It goes without saying that his first qualification was a hankering for more durable music than this. He had, however, a less recognised asset in that he was always a better judge of tunes than the listener whose jazz taste was encompassed by London W.1. Because commercial dance music so often demeaned its first origins, the jazz-lover despised it in bulk. This fostered the naïve belief that having no ear for melody he was perversely wasting his time on unmelodious rubbish. The exact opposite is the truth. It has been the hot man all along who knew the good songs from the bad. His taste for ditties had never been soured by the standard jazz practice of disguising so many fine tunes in a riot of improvisation. Thus it was a jazz critic, and only a jazz critic, who pointed out that the fatuous *Lambeth Walk* was an echo, if an unintentional one, of the old *What do we do on a dew-dew-dewy day?* It was the hot men who, hearing *Keepin' out of Mischief Now*, saw at once that this was an exceptional tune, and were not surprised to discover that Fats Waller had composed it. When Louis Armstrong would announce "one o' them good ol' good ones" he spoke for his public as well as for himself. The non-jazz public among his audiences merely looked blanker than ever.

The publications I have referred to were not then fan magazines, reflecting the teenage worship of spurious talent. Chiefly, they served the interests of the profession. That Tom Wilcock's New Florida State Rhythmagicians were readers of the *Melody Maker* did not, however, guarantee the collector at least this many fellow-fans in his immediate neighbourhood. A great deal of the printed material was instructional, and terms such as "smear," "dinge," and "mute out" familiar, if not comprehensible, to the lay reader. The specialist public who profited from these articles—the semi-pro. bandsmen—were rarely devotees of *le hot*. To add to the collector's exasperation, record supplements were as lavish with information as tycoons are with petty cash. The Brunswick leaflets of 1932 were uncommunicative to the point of secrecy, listing names, titles, and not a syllable more. It was all very well to Follow the Stars on Brunswick, but a little potted astronomy might have helped us to know which way we were going. Perhaps it is unjust to single out this company, whose red and black covers were of striking design, and the very paucity of whose announcements hinted at unguessable delights within. Sleeve-note prose, which is now actually being reviewed on its own merits, was undreamt of at that time.

To turn to literature, it need scarcely be said that any reference to New Orleans occurring in a travel book would entirely ignore the Crescent City's massive contribution to world music. Gallomania throbbed just as potently in the Delta tourist, the moment he beheld the Vieux Carré, as it was later to stir the marooned culture-snobs of black-out Britain. Koestler's "French flu," in fact, had raged longer and wider than he supposed. It is amusing to contrast this disregard of the New Orleans Negro with a recent lament by Sir Hugh Casson, the architect, that Basin Street has become "from end to unromantic end a car-park." And those ocean-hopping literary socialites whose diaries would register an experience of some "cacophonous coloured band" in uptown New York

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naturally infuriated readers who were finding it hard enough to make the same band's acquaintance on ten inches of shellac. "Cacophony" was the vogue-word in anti-jazz circles, just as "monstrosity" served for Epstein. (We needn't laugh. It might surprise the yahoos of those days to learn how many professional people of mere competence are "extremely able," or to know that an *aficionado* means—even when spelt with two f's—somebody who is interested in something.)

To close the dismal catalogue, the celluloid coronation of Paul Whiteman meant the abortion of jazz in Hollywood. When the righteous music *was* to be heard in films, its inclusion was pejorative. It is not in question that gangsterism helped to subsidise the Chicago style. When, however, Hollywood directors fashioned musical backgrounds to gangster films they did not, even by implication, contrast the music with the *milieu*. The unvarying moral was that one was cousin-german to the other. We may wonder at the feelings of the un-credited jazzmen called upon to emphasise in this way the facts of urban vice.

It is easy to see, therefore, why veteran jazz-lovers tend to dismiss the Johnny-come-lately's, the modish young journalists and *literati*, who are now busily pronouncing on whichever LP takes their fancy. The general feeling seems to be that before rushing into print they should get some service in. In the early days data were elusive and speculations risky; a great deal of correspondence was necessary before collectors could claim to know what they were talking about. It was common for records to be listened to with as much inconvenience, for familial reasons, as it had taken to acquire them. There used to be a scat song called *Mama Don't Allow It* which would have served as a fitting theme number for the harassed cat. When hearth-and-home were not hostile they were rarely encouraging. Some enthusiasts even had to take discs and instrument into the wash-house or the woodshed. And funds during the Depression were agonisingly meagre. Of the pioneer jazz-lover it can truly be said that he never had it so bad. The Welfare State critic, featherbedded with hi-fi and revealing sleeve-notes, is not only a blameless person, but in the course of his occupation can always fall back on one of the standard reference books in order to clear up a doubtful point. None of these books had been written when jazz promotion was in its infancy. "The literature of jazz," stated the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "is confused and controversial."

Without conceit, therefore, the pre-war fans knew they were important to the performer in a way concert-goers never could be. It was far from certain then that jazz would survive. A few thousand half-crowns were not going to save it from bankruptcy, but the devotion behind such an outlay might. And if I have stressed the poverty of the jazz-lover it is not because I would discount any enthusiasm shown by the better-heeled. One sultry Sunday evening in Harrogate the Ellington band played for more of the junior carriage trade than I have ever seen assembled at a jazz event. The universities, too, were jazz-minded, but from dilettantism rather than addiction. The mature critics of today are not, as far as I know, Grey Stone products.

Now there was certainly a stimulus in the "persecuted minority" feeling, and the music itself was a heady mixture of intimacy and remoteness. The intimacy had nothing to do with the size or sound of the unit recording. It could be as close in the stomps of a fourteen-piece band as in the tranquil ramblings of a solo pianist. The remoteness was, of course, geographical. The music did not communicate across centuries but across an ocean. Basically, perhaps, its emotional appeal was that of all good music anywhere, and the performer-listener relationship not unique. But in one respect the receptivity of jazz differed from that of other music. Jazz could not be enjoyed by young and old alike, by Jack and Jill alike, by a choleric colonel just as much as a pushing salesman. This was not because it offended against conservatism. It was new only in the sense that the best is new when it arrives. I can see now that all my favourite records, though for various reasons I can assign dates to them, were "traditional" in a much broader sense than this term suggests to the coffee-house classifier. Hearing Gillespie or some of the later moderns is not at all the same thing. I am conscious not only of the non-jazz elements in such music, but of its minor revolutionary character. Whereas no record I heard before the war suggested an *avant-garde* of any kind. I may have found a 1938 record more superficially modern than a 1924 one. I never found it modernistic. In fact I used to read with some unease descriptions of inter-war jazz as "this new, exciting music." It did not seem to me to be new in any musical framework. The bopsters, the progressives, the cerebrals, the cool school—who *are* new—I cannot respond to.

The reason, then, for the jazz indifference of the elderly, of women, and of those set in their ways, was hardly a musical reason at all. The language of jazz was a forthright tongue. It derided—and not always unconsciously—the cant and pomposity of its time. (This showed frequently in the titles, hundreds of which were

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gems of verbal economy.) So to hear a Higgenbotham solo after Vaughan Williams did not mean anything much one way or the other. But to hear a Higgenbotham solo after sitting through the dialogue of an Elstree film ("It might interest you to know," etc., etc.), or after reading an essay by the late Wilson Harris, was to thank God that Harlem and J. C. Higgenbotham existed. The music *as* music could sometimes be of secondary appeal. The beat, the four-in-a-bar, the "bent" notes, and so on, were not the only aspects of jazz that were supremely satisfying. This is not to say that pre-war listeners despised orthodoxy or the correctness of educated taste. They would not have condemned Freeman ("Bud loved culture," recalls Eddie Condon) for his efforts to widen a Lake Michigan horizon. With some misgivings they would have wished him well. And no thrill of horror seized a veteran audience at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1956 when Mezz Mezzrow, after swallowing at least once, quietly declared that "everyone should use his vote."

THE jazz leanings of the young jackpot moderns of literature and the theatre are understandable. They are, however, often held to be part of a socio-cultural credo. It is a point worth considering. As we have seen, for the forerunners of these young men the music was a music of protest in as much as it sounded its horns against pretentiousness, over-refinement, and stodge. That its creators' protest was a racial one did not pass unheeded. The studious listener, though, reflecting on the Scottsboro case, was bound to conclude that on a record like *The Duke Steps Out* Ellington could not have been protesting against anything but misery and mediocrity. As for the antics of the Establishment in those days, they were of no more concern to the cats than the ceremonies in a Tibetan lamasery. Social gradations were an irrelevance. A Geordie jazz-lover, for example, would have realised that in towns like Horsham or Guildford decent old ladies patronised the Public Library and tied their dogs to the railings outside. If he had never seen Sloane Square he knew which of all the accents in the English-speaking world had caused the heartiest mirth in the Commonwealth and the United States. He would have been aware that in certain parts of England "manners" are always external, if he still had to learn that loss of chastity can be more readily forgivable than the acquisition of one Cockney vowel. But all this was unlikely to distract him from the red and black covers. When the essayists finally came to naming names he could wince at references to "Mr. Louis Armstrong" or "Mr. Cab Calloway" without worrying himself too much about the state of mind behind these elephantine courtesies. Not that he could have done anything about it. For the politico-literary agitator the field was wide open. The cultural pastures were inviolate. The Amisologists of to-day seem to have missed what is really the point about their hero's fondness for "sham-detecting." What is surprising about Kingsley Amis's views is not that they are held but that they are published. Mr. Amis may have been serious or he may have been flippant when describing Peewee Russell as "the greatest artist since the death of Yeats," but the claim did get into print. In the *Sunday Times* a few years ago Somerset Maugham's series on great novelists of the past drew from a correspondent named Eric Russell (possibly the science fiction writer) a pained protest that these same novelists had always been for him the biggest bores in literature. There is nothing remarkable in this judgment. Half a million readers of the *Sunday Times* would—if very privately—endorse it. What is remarkable is that the letter was set up in type. Before the war it would never have got past the commissionaire.

In that kind of climate any serious or sympathetic mention of jazz was all but proscribed. (It might be proscribed to-day, in some journals, if it were not for the circulation factor.) When jazz awareness did begin to sprout, the fruits were either howlers or malice. The daily papers, on the whole, were well-intentioned, and one or two only just stopped short of encouragement. The periodical press has a more odious record. No Bateman or Arno drawing was ever attacked by art critics with the savage hatred musicologists directed at jazzmen. One at least of these remarks was actionable. And the reason for them was no mystery. At that time the resurgence of enthusiasm for "legitimate" music was ten years off, whereas the broadcasting dance bands with fixed spots every night claimed a national following. H. M. Bateman and Constable were not in competition. Queen's Hall and the Monseigneur were. As a result, the existence of a few struggling jazz artists with a tenable claim to recognition was a greater goad to the musical and literary press than any of the hotel bands with a transparent mass appeal. Anyone who was reading the *Musical Times* twenty-five years ago will recall the fury with which good jazz was denounced. If Dr. Percy Scholes showed forbearance, for Dr. Harvey Grace and his staff there was *not* room for both kinds. One prominent musician gave the game away completely when, joining a controversy in one of the religious weeklies, he added his *musical* qualifications to a letter asserting the *moral* dangers of jazz.

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IT MIGHT have been thought that these eager amateurs were, in their way, doing music some indirect good by their hunger for more discs. Yet if any acknowledgment to this effect came from the longhairs it was never uttered within earshot of me. Classical music apart, in that period there were not many gramophiles with modest resources who bought records simply to listen to. Not to dance to, not to play at social gatherings, not to solve the problem of Christmas presents, not to preserve memories of a favourite musical comedy, not to re-sentimentalise a love affair over and done with—but simply to listen to. It was a truism that records had had their day. The industry was in the red. Again, the few thousand half-crowns were not enough to regenerate it, but it was the jazz-lovers and they alone who made the public record-conscious again.

During these years, colour prejudice, when not rampant, wore a thin disguise. Then, as now, there were plenty of well-meaning people about who would have anathematised Jim Crow but were less vehement about James Crow, Esq. The longest quotation at the head of my article comes from a collection of essays called *I Commit to the Flames*. The title is Nazi-inspired, the author, in his foreword, tying himself into a knot to defend it while rejecting its political implications. Noted for his "humanist" outlook and the "urbanity" of his style, he occasionally takes time out for some cod sociology, rejoicing, for example, that *Lily of Laguna* should still be chorused in Blackpool pubs on a Bank Holiday evening. The essay in question is entitled *Caliban*. the author having some reputation as a Shakespearian. That he is a white supremacist as well he is careful to disclaim by contrasting the orgiastic coonery with Negro activities of another kind:

> "Constantine, the black magic of West Indian cricket, is most welcome at Lord's. . . ."

It would be instructive to muse upon everything that is implied by the term "welcome" in this passage. (The essay ends with a further reference to "coons," this time Caribbean spectators.)

The Gramophone has already been mentioned. It was, and still is, edited by Compton Mackenzie, who used to make it plain that jazz appeared in his magazine on sufferance. This is an editorial attitude I have found unparalleled in thirty years' familiarity with the periodical press. Not having read any of Sir Compton's novels, I am unable to say whether they show evidence of a broader mind. I notice, though, from half an hour spent on the story of his editorship, in his autobiography, a lack of any reference to Edgar Jackson's department.

Yet an honest curiosity flickered in unexpected quarters. F. E. Baily, the romantic novelist, while pooh-poohing the ardour of the fans, confessed to having enjoyed Henderson and Benny Carter in his home. This must surely be the only known instance of a listener who actually bought hot records and still wondered what the fuss was about. An analogy in sport would be the man who liked to watch Manchester United but never got around to cheering them. Among other writers Sacheverell Sitwell showed casual interest, and Arnold Haskell, in a book on ballet, had a word or two for Ellington. I think I would treasure most, though, a *Melody Maker* letter from a Dartmouth cadet. The youthful writer, who deplored "Mike's" growing fastidiousness, and offered to contribute to the cost of a short holiday for him, is now famous as John Lodwick.

THE B.B.C., incessantly berated by the jazz journals, was alternately cagey and liberal in its attitude to *le hot*, and how many tugs-of-war went on in the programme-planning departments can only be guessed. It is an astonishing fact that the first rumour that Ellington was coming to London—and a well-founded one—was actually traced to Portland Place. To offset Mr. Stone's unfeeling treatment of the subject, Robert Tredinnick gave capable recitals from the Midlands, and a little later a pseudonymous barrister in the Manchester area followed suit. By this time the daily papers were more reliable. The *Herald*, because of family ties with the *Melody Maker*, was the first to set an example. The policy of the *Daily Worker* was as predictable as to-morrow afternoon. It must be disheartening, therefore, for King Street to admit that in three decades no Soviet notability of any kind has been heard to approve the degenerate music. Nor has any Negro jazzman requited the journal's affection. Its insistence on jazz respectability was long and valiant, but the trouble was that the most obscure coloured drummer in the Western Hemisphere probably had a good idea of just where the Scottsboro defence funds ended up. As for the *Daily Express*, one of its most startling scoops was a front-page report of Louis Armstrong's death early in 1933. The deceased had been known, the story informed us, as "the iron-lipped trumpeter." It omitted to add by whom. It also omitted to mention in any later edition that what had really happened to Armstrong had been nothing more lethal than a dog-bite. The *Sunday Referee*, the first sponsor of Dylan Thomas, published jazz reflections by Constant Lambert and one or two thoughtful readers. Which of to-day's journals have been the last, faltering laggards to scramble across the tailgate of the bandwagon is no secret. It may

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not be fanciful to claim that if it took two world wars to do it, it was done in the end.

BEFORE all categories of jazz artist became fashionable in the Swing Era, the American collector had been something of a mystery. The fans in Britain looked in vain for Stateside counterparts. Americans who cherished hot records seemed to be a tripartite class. There were the experts, the ones who seemed always to have been experts, whatever their age, right back to the days of Jelly Roll Morton. Then there were those loosely tied by profession to popular music—the more perceptive song-pluggers and arrangers, the publicity men, the night-club fringe, the vaudeville gossip-writers, and so on. And finally there was the Negro race, more blues-minded than stomp-minded, spending more money on Bessie Smith than Jack Teagarden, a multitude of nameless allies from whom no spokesman ever emerged. There may have been, from 1934 onwards, rhythm clubs in Wigan and Plymouth. There were none in Wichita or Pittsburgh. College boys who had been in high school during the raccoon coat and hip-flask era were the mainstay of the Casa Loma orchestra, but otherwise showed little discrimination. American magazines did not enforce the strict division of hot from commercial. A note on new Armstrong recordings would recall that he was "a pioneer of hot licks," and then the reviewer would pass on to Anson Weeks or other musical anaemics of the day.

There were small but vociferous groups in North-Western Europe. Holland was especially partisan for its size and population, and Hugues Panassie's judgment was respected far beyond Paris. In Britain, during these formative years, jazz criticism was dominated by "Mike." His background was international, his base metropolitan, and for these reasons alone his failure to understand the deadly seriousness with which the more isolated fans pursued their hobby was inexcusable. In the second volume of his life story, however, he shows some contempt for the faithful readers of his twenties. The cats, who have remained unprovoked, would still insist that columns more joyously readable have never appeared in a musical periodical. "He writes," complained one staid correspondent in Cadishead, "like a contributor to an undergraduate magazine." It was a minority view. And style apart, he was usually dependable. "A pity," commented an American critic a few years later, "that Spike Hughes doesn't write about jazz any more. He had more wrong ideas than right ones, of course, but he was amusing." The first part of this appraisal was to be expected from men on the spot, but again it is a minority opinion that I think the years have corrected. Certainly "Mike" had his prejudices. For British readers he canonised Ellington, excommunicated the Casa Loma, and was no fount of either fact or fancy about the Chicagoans. There may have been racial reasons for this failing. In some ways his jazz taste was *italianizzato*, the result of long periods spent in that country in his boyhood. Venuti, Massaro ("Eddie Lang"), Rollini, and Signorelli were all too often his blue-eyed boys, and none of them amount to anything much nowadays. The only two Chicagoans of Mediterranean ancestry, Polo and Marsala, were no more than marginally active. It was the wrong white school, anyway, that "Mike" lauded. The opinions he revised in New York did not include this one, and he came back, unfortunately, with a rather tedious bias in favour of the musicians with whom he had fraternised. That he is still not lost to jazz is suggested by some of the anonymous reviews now appearing in *The Times*.

Who, in fact, is lost?

"I am 47," said Stanley Dance at the I.C.A. this year, "and though I've tried more than once to escape from jazz, I keep coming back to it." In the same building, shortly afterwards, when Ellington's *Stevedore Stomp* was played, a remark from the platform set me wondering so apprehensively how long it would be before ol' rockin' chair gets me that I didn't wake up till the record was half over. It was the recitalist's announcement that *it had been handed down to him by his father*.

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

ITEMS:—The German press reports that, just before he died, Bertolt Brecht had been translating (from a French version of the original Polish) Adam Wazyk's heterodox *Poem for Adults*. The "Arbeitsgruppe Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe der Schriften Bertolt Brecht" in East Berlin has made it clear, however, that it is unlikely that the German text of Brecht's translation will appear in the foreseeable future.... Konstantin Simonov, who recently had to go through several performances of "self-criticism," has been relieved of his post as editor of *Novy Mir* and instructed to do his future writing in Uzbekistan.... Representatives of the National Peking Opera Theatre announced at a meeting in Peking that "300 plays would be written or staged by the theatre this year."

*

The advice of the Deputy of China's National People's Congress, Yeh Hsi-Chun, advocating fresh tadpoles as a contraceptive, as reported in this column in April, has now been tested scientifically. Unfortunately, the results are disappointing, although *Jen Min Jih Pao* (April 14, 1958) in reporting them, formulates the conclusions in a spirit of proper scientific caution:

"The prescription of using tadpoles as a contraceptive has been tested by the physiological laboratory of the Chekiang Research Institute of Chinese Medicine and has tentatively proved to be useless. For the purpose of testing the effectiveness of the tadpoles as a contraceptive, the Chekiang Research Institute of Chinese Medicine selected from the joint public-private Hangchow Emporium, the Hangchow Cotton Mill, and from among the residents in Hangchow City sixty-four women between 25 and 45 years of age, who had given birth to three or more children and were willing to swallow tadpoles as a test. The tadpoles were swallowed three to five days after the menstruation period, according to the instructions of Dr. Yeh Hsi-chun. Twenty-four and 20 tadpoles were swallowed respectively on the first and second day. According to investigations conducted to check the effectiveness of tadpoles as a contraceptive, among the 42 female workers of the Hangchow Cotton Mill who swallowed the tadpoles between April 5 and May 4 last year, 18 persons, or 43 per cent of those who went through the test, became pregnant. Among the Hangchow residents who swallowed tadpoles for contraceptive purposes, two women became pregnant after a month."

*

Maxims *à la* Rochefoucauld have been published in Poland by Stanislaw George Lec under the title, "Unkempt Thoughts." Some of them are worth quoting:

"I have dreamt about reality. I woke up with relief."

"Do not describe your dreams. The Freudians might one day come to power."

"In some countries banishment is one of the highest penalties, in others the most humanitarian citizens should fight for it."

"In hell the devil is a Positive Hero."

"'One can make two gallows out of one cross,' a specialist said disdainfully."

"The most faithful servants of myths are mercenaries."

"The censor is also a creator of language."

*

A new international Communist journal, *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, was launched in August, in Prague.

Eugenio Reale, the Italian ex-Communist leader and ex-Ambassador in Warsaw, in a book recently published in Paris, recalls an incident about its predecessor at the foundation meeting of the Cominform in 1947:

"I protested against the title For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy, *which Zhdanov proposed, and which I found too long and too complicated. 'I cannot imagine an Italian worker asking his newsagent to give him* For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy. *We must find a shorter title.' Zhdanov thundered at me: 'There are no short titles or long titles. A title should express an idea, a programme. Anyway, if you want to know, the title has been* created *by Stalin who communicated it to me this morning by telephone....'"*

*

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LETTER FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

by

Anthony Rhodes

HOTEL PRAHA
TATRANSKA LOMNICA
SLOVAKIA

IN this big luxury hotel in the Tatra mountains are dozens of Russians on holiday, together with Czechs, Hungarians, and East Germans. All these people are neatly dressed and their behaviour is most decorous. They speak quietly in the great halls, and move about unostentatiously. Rarely does one hear a guffaw. At night, when they dance, there is no heavy drinking, none of the happy, beer-swilling atmosphere of a British crowd on holiday. They might be so many bourgeois. Yet nearly all are workers—bus-drivers, miners, electricians—from the Eastern lands of Europe. There is even, I am informed, a shepherd.

The only person who behaved "loudly" during my five-day stay was a business-man from Cologne, who drank champagne and laughed so grossly with his lady friend that a number of "guests" left the bar. No one, it seemed, would have dreamt of asking him to be quiet; it would have been bad taste.

It had been the same in the opera house at Kosice, when I arrived in Slovakia. Here, in this little town on the Russian frontier, sat the same proletarian society, listening to Gounod's *Faust* —a trifle self-conscious in their Sunday best. The atmosphere in the intervals, when we went out to drink our *spritz's* on the terrace, was also one of "refinement"—polite remarks and subdued laughter in small groups of both sexes, the gentlemen opening the doors for the ladies, helping them on with their coats. One might have been in Sadler's Wells.

This society lacks Western vulgarity; but it also lacks Western animation. A strange, almost eerie seriousness possesses these people, quietly convinced that their society is better than ours. When I talked to them in the hotel, they did not argue ferociously, or behave as our Western Communists do, overstating their case. They listened to my arguments politely; they even agreed with some of the things I said. But they always returned to the same point, "Your society is for the minority. Our's is for the majority. Free enterprise ignores the poor and stupid." I occasionally mentioned Djilas's *The New Class*, with its claim of a favoured minority. They pointed out that President Novotny, like all his ministers, lives in a small semi-detached villa outside Prague. (Here they are probably right. The Czechs have always been very like the Swiss.)

Relations between the "guests" and the staff in this luxury hotel raised the question in another form. How then, I asked, should one treat the extremely efficient and well-trained servants in this egalitarian society? The waiters, *concierges*, and doormen were all dressed in tails with white ties, or in black frock coats; they looked, behaved, and served as they do in the West. Occasionally, a guest would talk, even joke, with a waiter who brought him a drink. But the waiter would remain standing obsequiously beside him, not speaking unless spoken to. Among the "guests," I was told, were two waiters from Prague, taking their annual holiday in the Tatra mountains. I watched them ordering food, as they sat with their wives at a nearby table—being served by waiters who could, presumably, return the compliment one day, on *their* holiday in Prague. The guests did not leave them a tip. But here perhaps a kind of *noblesse oblige* enters. For tipping, although not officially recognised in Czechoslovakia, is almost as general as in the West.

The Russian guests were the greyest of all. They came down to dinner together, they ate together, they digested together. Afterwards, they all trooped out of the dining-room together, perhaps fifty of them, male and female, mostly middle-aged, nose to tail. They seemed to be still in their Collectives. Even if they came into the bar, they came in a group. To have a drink with an isolated Russian was extremely difficult; one had to drink with them all.

The contrast between this society and our own was emphasised even more strongly by the Grimsby Town football team, which was touring Czechoslovakia and staying in the hotels. With their blazers and crested pockets, their good-humoured, noisy beer-drinking, these players certainly introduced some colour. The player who spoke to me was shocked that the Russians did not pay for their drinks. "I have been watching them closely for two days," he said. "Fifty-six of them. But I've never seen anyone hand over any money! I reckon they're bleeding the satellites."

In fact, none of the tourists, Russian or native, do "hand over money." They either come with coupons from their factories or, if they come in groups, the transaction is arranged for them before they leave home, by the government travel agency.

The most impressive instance of egalitarianism in this hotel was a group of about a dozen elderly men having lunch at a nearby table. In their braces and open-necked shirts, I took them for a group of gas-inspectors on a bummel. To my surprise, I was informed that they were "Catholic priests." They were government-approved priests who had been excommunicated

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by the Pope, members of the schismatic "Catholic Action" movement. My informant claimed that such men were preferred to the "old type of priest in his cassock." I asked him if such men, so dressed, could inspire a feeling of spiritual leadership. He replied that the people preferred them "dressed like themselves."

EVEN in the cultural field, the same decorous greyness predominates. Some weeks before, I visited a Writers' and Journalists' home, near Kutna Hura. They were living in the chateau of Rozter, which once belonged to a German noble family, but has, since 1945, belonged to the State—about a dozen of them, lounging about on the terraces, in deck-chairs, reading and writing. They talked to me amiably, and were most hospitable. They come here for a month or six weeks, and live two to three in bedrooms which are clean and well-swept but, like the rest of the house, quite characterless. Only the old family portraits still unaccountably hanging on the walls (among the usual photographs of the leaders, Gottwald and Novotny) gave any colour to the place.

One interesting point is, I think, that women play such a part in "socialist" prose. Some of them were living here. In Marya Majerova's novel, *The Most Beautiful World*, the positive socialist class-hero appears for the first time in Czech literature. Then there is the late Marya Pujmanova who, in *Declaration of Love* and *Millions of Doves*, concentrates on politics, on the Stockholm Peace Prize, and "against aggression in Korea." Another vigorous lady writer, Alena Bernaskova, spent a long time in a large factory in Northern Bohemia, before writing *The Open Road*.

A feature of modern Czechoslovak prose is the revival of the old French *roman fleuve*. It deals, mostly in trilogies, with the evolution of "modern socialist man"; and there are three basic types: the proletarian type, the village type, the historical type. They all contain the same "positive" heroes, the shock-worker, the brigade worker, the guardian of the border, the absentee, the wavering intellectual (a very common type). Then there are the "negative" heroes, such as the ardent listener to Radio Free Europe, or the plotting émigré in New York. In composing these *roman fleuves*, the writers often give themselves yearly working quotas, challenging one another in quantitative competition. The older, well-known writers who flourished before the war seem to have given up trying to put on this strait-jacket. They confine themselves largely to tales for children and translations.

In such a society, literary criticism is naturally almost as important as literary composition. Critical hair-splitting about degrees of "social relevance" surpasses anything we have about "Joyce's view of Yeats' view of Keats' Cosmology." Whereas a writer in the West, singled out for dislike or jealousy by one of our half-dozen powerful journals and their critics, can generally be sure of a sympathetic hearing in another paper, he is helpless here. Condemned in one paper, he is condemned in all. Journalism is in the same monolithic state, little more than a series of official broadsheets dealing daily with three main subjects—Visits of Foreign Delegations, and their interminable speeches; Spy Trials; and Thefts of Government Property. So boring are their newspapers that those who can read English (often anti-Communists) even enjoy reading the only English paper regularly on sale in Prague, the *Daily Worker*.

As for the theatre, the state it had reached by the time of the 20th Congress was revealed at the Writers' Congress by Miloslav Stehlik, who complained that it had simply been fitted into the Economic Plan: "30 per cent original Czech plays, 30 per cent Czech and Russian Classics, 30 per cent Soviet plays and plays from the People's Democracies, and 10 per cent from the Western Classics." Another writer, Ladislav Mnacko, said he had had to rewrite the last scene of a play in which a workman was injured on a building site—"because we had to spread the atmosphere of gay optimism, and an accident to a workman on a building site is in direct contradiction to this."

The public, who do not enjoy this sort of politics-in-art, refused to go to the theatre; so they were inveigled by an ingenious choice of title. They went to see *The Black Mistress*, and found she was the beloved mine. Or they went to see *The Burning Love*, and found it was the love of a railwayman for the October Revolution.

AGAINST this new, grey "Establishment," the small pro-Western or bourgeois element which remains in Prague still struggles pathetically. But the Czechs, even at the best of times, have never been a highly colourful people (except, of course, in their beautiful music), and daily the efforts of this little group grow weaker —for the régime is destroying it economically. The Prime Minister himself admitted only a few months ago that, in the vast scheme now in operation to reduce the number of bureaucrats all over the country, it is those of "bad class background" who are being dismissed, whatever their efficiency. This means, simply, those of bourgeois origin, who are thus reduced to starvation.

Curiously, opposition to the grey society comes from another, unexpected source. It comes from the working-class youth, who have benefited for

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the last ten years by the first vacancies in the secondary schools and universities. The authorities are concerned that these, and many other new social benefits, are not properly appreciated by this chosen youth. They had expected them to provide "the new leaders of the future." But these young men and women, who have never known anything but the Grey Society, seem to have sensed (thanks, perhaps, to the very education which they have been so lavishly granted), that there *is* something livelier outside, and which they know about only dimly from the odd Hollywood film. They crave it. These are the youths whom you meet in the officially frowned-upon bars and night-clubs which purvey Western jazz and "rock-'n-roll." They are surly, self-confident, knowledgable about the arts, and utterly scornful of politics. They are "angry young Czechs."

On a lower level than this are the Teddy Boys, or "hooligans" as they are called here. They are another attempt, if unconscious, at combating the greyness of the new order. The paper *Lidova Demokracie* revealed, as recently as last October, that there are, in Prague alone, 344 hooligan gangs, with a total membership of over 2,000. Several show trials were held, and the hooligans and zoot-suiters were sentenced to forced labour, and later shown at their work over the television—still wearing their zoot-suiters outfits!

THE only domain where this greyness is less evident is, as I have said, in music. It is clearly harder for politics to make itself heard in, say, the wood-wind section of an orchestra. There have, of course, been plenty of *Cantatas to Stalin* by leading Czech composers, and music is still not entirely free from bumbledom. But no one now takes this seriously. The Prague Festival of Modern Music, which I attended, lasts three weeks, and is as good as anything in Western Europe—with the advantage that the self-conscious 'culture' of places like Glyndebourne and Edinburgh is absent. Music flows in the veins of the Czechs and Slovaks.* The Czech Philharmonic orchestra must still be one of the finest orchestras in the world. There were also a number of visiting musicians, including the Finn Hannikainen, the French pianist Casadesus, the Chilean Claudio Arrau, and our own Sargent and Barbirolli, the last bringing with him the entire Hallé Orchestra.

Too much political importance should not be attached to the extraordinary ovations given to the British orchestra, which was cheered for so long and so enthusiastically in the Smetana Hall that Sir John Barbirolli was almost moved to tears. But there can be no doubt that, in one of the most musical cities in the world, with seven orchestras of its own, the Prague public wished to express something more than purely musical appreciation—affection at seeing the West again. They lined the street afterwards, for nearly a mile, to cheer the Hallé orchestra as it left. It was significant, too, that when Sir John made a short speech at the end of the concert, finishing with the words, "God bless you!", several of them cried, "We need it!" Sir John reported that, immediately he and his orchestra arrived in Prague, every member quickly made friends with three or four Czechs who played the same instrument. The bassoonist was carried off home by four bassoonists, the flautist by four flautists, the oboist by four oboe men. His whole orchestra had disappeared almost before it reached its hotel.

The performance of the complete cycle of the operas of Janácek (1854–1928) was the highlight of the festival. Here, it is true, some politics entered. The Czechs make much of the fact today that Janacek dealt with "social problems". The official programme of the festival claims that "he did not hesitate to introduce politics into his operas". It also pointed out, significantly, that he was a Russophile, who christened his children with Russian names, Olga and Vladimir. He bases nearly all his operas on philosophical or social themes, employing satire with almost Voltairean power—as in the delightful *Journey of Mr Brown to the Moon and the XVth century*, where he attacks bourgeois complacency in Prague at the beginning of this century (clearly an approved theme today).

The greatest living Czech composer, Martinu, is now living in self-imposed exile in Switzerland; but he was represented by his new Cantata, and by a work well known in the west, *Comedy on the Bridge*. Official proposals have recently been made to Martinu for him to return to Czechoslovakia, without victimisation. He has not accepted them. There have been plenty of cases of well-known Czech musicians who have been invited by foreign orchestras, and whose passports have been refused, or so tardily granted that they arrived too late. This is unfortunate, because there are some excellent young composers in Czechoslovakia today. Men like Ilya Hurnik and Petr Eben, modern in idiom but in the great Czech tradition of highly coloured music based on folklore, would delight Western audiences. They would also dispel the notion that, at least in Czechoslovakia's greatest art, *all* is grey in the new society.

* There are to-day 12 companies in Czechoslovakia which, in proportion to the size of the population, is more than in any other country in the world.

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Stephen Potter

The Manship of Memoirs

How fares L.C.C.? Students of Gameslife will be interested to know that the Lifemanship Correspondence College at Yeovil is still full of life or at any rate fairly full. As we shall describe more fully in our forthcoming pamphlet SUPERMANSHIP, our skeleton staff has actually been increased. Before we describe one of our new and special activities, let us remind readers of the more popular members of our staff, and tell them of these newcomers....

GATTLING-FENN and the rest are still with us, needless to say, at the prime of whatever age they are. "Rattling Gattling," as we call him, is still forceful and eager. After twenty-five years of being the oldest young man at Yeovil, he has now entered into a new lease of life as the youngest old one.

Cogg-Willoughby is now the internationally accepted scholar of Gameslife and spends his time codifying and rectifying. Every day through the Wild Garden between the roller and the greenhouse, both out of use, he delicately picks his way for twenty minutes and it is generally recognised that this is Cogg's relaxation, and no student is allowed, or wants, to speak to him.

G. Odoreida is still—Odoreida. He holds no actual Lectureship with us and has not for four years. We did allow him, when he advertised for pupils, to refer to himself, as "sometime Reader at the Lifemanship College": but by altering "sometime" to "sometimes," he managed to give the impression that he occasionally did us a good turn, and that it was he who had parted with us, instead of vice versa.

But now for our big bit of news. What of the College Building itself, you will say. Well, we have moved from 681 Station Road to No. 675 just the other side of the level crossing. This was an important decision for us. The new building is actually smaller, but it is infinitely preferable because it is infinitely more modern. In period houses such as 681 (1884), students do drink in an enormous amount of history through the pores, even if they don't actually read books. But how much more in key with the new, up-to-date Lifemanship is 675! Totally untraditional, it is sheathed in concrete, while one whole big side of it is half glass, or looks vaguely like it. Look at it from Siemann's the tobacconist's and see how colour and atmosphere are given by reflection only, in the glass sheeting, of signals and telegraph poles, tautly upright, and as counterpoint the yellow smoke plumes from the engine funnels. In certain rooms the atmosphere is controlled. The roof is wide open to the sun, and there are days when definite sun-bathing is possible, which will be more generally enjoyed when our plea for smokeless fuel on the railways has met with some response, or our letter at any rate answered. The whole thing was created by Tackton in 1925 and partly derives from the Chapel of the Secondary School at Ausvierfleischenhültz. The window frames are by Slipton, the chimneys by Skipton, and the filling material, used to cover the cracks formed by the rather lovely weathering to which all concrete is subject, is by Odzon.

With the new buildings, the new staff. First

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"EPPY" STICKING THE FOUNDER GATTLING FENN

COGG WILLOUGHBY

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came Cornelius Sticking, vigorous go-ahead left-winger of the 1920 school, whose gambit is to be tweedily emancipated, whatever the circumstances. Then the Lawrenceman, as we call him, keen follower of D. H. Lawrence without having actually read him, extremely valuable in play against common-sense Sticking. And finally Irvin Cannery, valuable against both, with this splendid masterploy of calling them "delightfully period."

THIS was the little band I found myself talking to one day. Our week's work had been effective, but there is no doubt we had been pretty down on everybody.

"Anybody can criticise"—how often have I said this, not for students, to whom I rarely speak, but to Staff. "But how few do." "I mean *do*," I said, walking up and down the Common Room, while they sat wondering. "Do, DO."

"Do what?" said Cogg, who kept a diary which a publisher had once asked to see, and who felt several points up so far as "do" was concerned.

"Yes, what?" said Sticking, who did oil painting on wooden boards, absolutely untaught, in his bedroom.

"We should write ourselves," I said. "Stick our necks out."

"What?" said Gattling, heartily.

"Of course we could always write our autobiographies," said Cannery. "That would be dead right for 1958."

I wanted the suggestion to come from them. After all, G. Wert and Effie Scudamore had written their autobiographies, and so had Sticking Minor, as we called Sticking's nephew, and he had had his published, perhaps because he was only seventeen.

I did not make it an order but soon pencils were out, and I had them all sitting round the common-room table, making a start. Soon Autobiography Hour was begun as an institution on alternate evenings. I sat in a corner stimulating the laggards; but on the whole they went to it with a will. The Lawrenceman was the most difficult. "My life—what *is* my life?" he was always saying; and he strode to the window to stare at the low sun over the corner of the gasometer. "To write it in a room—behind glass?" he said. "Perhaps, when saxifrage grows on the walls, and the roof is open to sky and stars—perhaps then." But the greatest difficulty was Gattling-Fenn, who rather surprisingly sat hunched up over his blank paper and could think of nothing to say, not even with the help of an occasional gin and tonic.

The strange thing was that Gattling started better than any of us. His idea was to begin with a sort of it-was-fun-while-the-going-was-good book. I applauded this until I read the following passage. I don't think people who know us well would say that Gattling had travelled more than myself. In fact we neither have. With this in mind, let us examine the following passage from his first chapter:

> Over the desert the African wind plays queer tricks, and our tiny, single-engined Kalaad, flying much too low, I thought, began to buck and slide alarmingly in the surface eddies. Passengers were on the verge of panic and it was a nice decision whether to go forward to try and cajole our dark-skinned pilot (of the voluble gestures) to climb the obvious 6,000 feet, or to sit back and try to look bored as if everything was all right. I decided on the latter course. If "Engleesh thinks O.K." then, by some mysterious law of the Tribes, everybody can feel safe.

Now I took the trouble to check back on this page because this was the first I'd ever heard of G. flying dangerously anywhere. He would have mentioned this about a million times if he'd ever done it. Of course we all knew that he had once taken this sea voyage to Gibraltar—the longest of his life—and had stayed there for a week at the small Stratford Hotel run by this Mrs. Fenwick. What I did not realise was that on the Tuesday of this week he had taken one of the little Taylor Bros air-buses on the day-trip to Algiers and that this did involve, if you counted the very dried-up little playground behind the Algiers-Astor, flying over something which might be called a desert.

I TOOK G. to task for this, and I am sorry now that I did so; because from that

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moment his inspiration went and he never really got back his confidence. There were times when the spark returned and he said that the only question was whether his was going to be the sort of life which would be serialised by the *Sunday Times* or the *Sunday Express* because of his experiences in 1940, and the fact that at that time the Home Guard at Hale (a place just outside Manchester where he had been platoon commander) had been asked to man, in their exercises, a line from Hale Golf Course, starting at the old eighteenth tee and ending at the branching of A56. He said that he expressed an opinion, in a mock exercise against Moodhams Enamel Company Home Guard (Moodhams Enamel Company being supposed to be the enemy) that the line should extend as far as The Grapes, Moberley. Well, whether they had agreed with him or not, and this he couldn't remember, Gattling became possessed with the phrase "I Disagree with High Command" and kept repeating it to himself: whereas we thought that even to suggest such a chapter heading might put the *Sunday Times'* back up, and no good could come of that. If he could have a hint of physical danger in his life, we said to Gattling, who was a shade too young for War No. 1, and hopelessly too old for No. 2, it would be better. But he hadn't. In the end we invented "three years of his life, 1938–41, of which he could neither speak nor write," and he "must crave the reader's pardon for this gap in my brief story." This idea was the best thing that happened to Gattling-Fenn, because it bridged over the time when he was being public relations officer in a firm which specialised in disinfectants—an unsuccessful episode in Gattling's career.

Another suggestion we had for Gattling, talking it over among ourselves, was that he should make use of the very fact of this bad luck of nothing ever happening. Coad-Sanderson had read some Life of some quite good essayist who was also in the Home Office. There was a splendidly long passage in this autobiography taken up in a completely O.K. way by a youthful experience which for some reason "meant" something to this man. It was about standing by some lock and watching the lock gates being worked, so that the flooding in of the water, and the punts and an old barge floating up underneath him, started a new chapter in his life, and that the old floating bits of straw and one empty packet of ten Players "shone with hidden gold." Everybody agreed that this section was so good that Gattling could use something, pretty well anything, like this and that it ought to fill up about eight pages. The great question was what. We all chewed this over. "The first thing I remember was being frightened of the knife-cleaning machine: it made me cry, and the smell of knife-powder made me sick," Gattling said. That was good, but we all believed Gattling could do even better. The youthful visual experience which we chose in the end for Gattling was the soda-water syphon on the small sideboard in the corner of the Fenns' living-room which Gattling's father used to visit about ten times an evening. We explained to Gattling how to say that he suddenly really saw what it looked like.

"I should think I did really see it," said G.

"No, we mean see," we said, making a very slight pause before the word "see," and slightly narrowing our eyes—all very annoying for Gattling, but we were of course helping, and we took over for him, describing the spot of light gleaming, sliding on, the spout of the syphon, as the bottle was tipped and retracted, tipped and retracted, and the impulsive plunge of the soda into the glass, making a gimlet-hole in the shallow pond of honey-coloured whisky.

"Shallow?" said Gattling, boringly still not seeing the point. "To my recollection the whisky was at least the equivalent of a pub treble."

THE curious thing about Cogg-Willoughby was that so far as his autobiography was concerned his difficulty was almost exactly the same as Gattling Fenn's—very little happened to him. To begin with he was far more diffident about this than Gattling. He did make some notes under the

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heading of "Chapters out of Childhood"—an excellent title we all thought, and a good theme, because although his childhood was unusually uneventful, it was a Micky Spillane thriller compared to his early manhood and middle age, when the most important thing that happened to him was the death, in Canada, of a half-sister. Everybody agreed that if Cogg's autobiography was worth doing at all, it must depend entirely on the quality of the writing, and indeed Cogg was so conscious of this fact that he took nearly a fortnight writing the first two hundred words, although we were all around on tap to help him with this business of the quality of the writing. One of Cogg's difficulties was that he had an extremely bad memory. "An absolute must is your prep school," we said. There were only two things he could think of: One was that he was once top in form for parsing, and the other was a boy whose nickname was "Uncle," to whom during the autumn term Cogg used to give an expensive firework once a week to bribe him out of throwing Cogg into a furze bush. There was an obvious chance here of building up Cogg as a man whose whole character was warped by being bullied; although there is a smaller group who remember Cogg's rather horrid treatment of Mather, at Tidworth O.T.C. camp. It is they who say that it was Cogg who was the bully, and that this is the fact which tainted his later life and left the trauma.

Later we went over this ability of Cogg's to win prizes: but it was not so fruitful as it at first seemed. "You never had any difficulty with languages, of course," we suggested; and an interesting point came up here. Because Cogg's mother was half French, it was always regarded as absolute Gospel that Cogg was bi-lingual. Actually this was far from the case, though he did evolve a series of valuable ploys to support this idea. If ever French had to be spoken he would always shut up dead or start reading a book, somehow suggesting that the sort of French we were using would fall to pieces instantly if he introduced the real thing. Occasionally people would ask him questions about French, and he managed these extraordinarily well. "Now, Cogg, what's the French for a 'boarding-house'?"

Cogg would not look up. "There is really no word, interestingly enough."

I wasn't going to let him get away with this so I said, "But what about *pension*?" Cogg looked expressionless for a second; then he said:

"That is the vocabulary-book word, but—Danger. *Pension* suggests a whole tribe of associations which simply do not exist in England." As Cogg's vocabulary was only about fifty words he did well, I think, at this point, by saying, "Actually one should use a phrase. If you wanted to be colloquial you could say *coup de maison*."*

FOWLERING UP:—Sometimes I am quite proud of my little band of "Merry Memoirists," as I call them—we have plenty of chaff during break. But when we were in the midst of our difficulties with Gattling, I could not help noticing the change in Cogg-Willoughby who to start with had been a good deal slower even than Gattling. When we were all sitting round at the autobiography writing-table, scratching our heads, it began to be annoying to see Cogg scribbling away without a moment's pause. Now this is a fine ploy in the examination room. I have used it myself. Nervous candidates, unable to make a single movement of their pen, sit watching you, transfixed.

Cogg was annoying us. It became essential to "stop flow," as we used to say in the mad but happy days of early Gamesmanship. It is essential in a corporate community to discourage the disagreeably outstanding. As I explained to my good friends, *we were a team* of autobiog. writers. With my more or less commissioned *Literary Guide to the Thames*

* Cogg made endless use of the *coup de*. There was another thing he knew about French, and he built a tremendous lot of his language life around it. And that was that the accent in all French words comes on the last syllable. He would bring in half-Anglicised proper names like Avignon and hit the last syllable with an "ong" like the *Queen Mary*'s hooter. In a restaurant he would always ask, as his first thing, for pâté Maison, because he had learnt how to accent these syllables like the opening phrase of the Fifth Symphony.

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Valley on the stocks I felt justified in checking Cogg myself; and I did it by a very simple method which I have used for about thirty years and which I call Fowlering Up. You look over the shoulder of the writer and make a yes-but comment on something minutely verbal. Start smoothly by saying "I shall like this, I know. Yes, you're using the word 'cathedral' in the right sense, I think." That was the word Cogg was writing. He seemed to take no notice.

Later I said "Yes . . . 'the monks intone' . . ." then I twirled round quickly with my face practically touching Cogg's and said, "Why not say 'chant'?"

"Why should I?" said Cogg.

"Shorter—simpler."

"It's only a letter shorter," said Cogg.

"More English?" I said. But you can never trust Cogg. Feeling that he was going to prove the word was Dutch or something, I tried to be more general, and quickly I read again, over his shoulder.

" 'The lights came on one by one'—isn't that rather a coincidence?" I was trying to appear to be appearing to try not to be patronising. Cogg did slow down a little, when I said this.

"I mean aren't you a tiny bit bemused by the phraseology of your own pet phrases . . . a little bit pen proud . . . of what you-know-who would call a Grace?"

Sure enough, Cogg's pen did begin to drag a little bit—a little bit as if he was writing in treacle.

I HAD expected Sticking to have little difficulty with his own memoirs: but although he speaks so readily in his clear way and had more wit in his talk than most of us, as soon as he started to write the blood seemed to ebb from the expressive centres of his brain and all that was left by the falling tide was a lot of verbal old iron. Words like "federation," "workers," "natural evolutionary processes," "produce," and even "proletariat" kept turning up. "You must be more personal," I said, looking over his shoulder. "Detail. For Heaven's sake look at this: 'My part in the development of the Workers' Educational movement in East Anglia. . . .' "

"Aha, *that's* the selling line to put on the jacket," said Cannery.

"What did you actually *do*?" I kept urging. Sticking became uneasy.

By a series of cross-questions it turned out that Sticking's only concrete memory of this was bicycling along a muddy lane near Hay Tor with one of his students, a girl with a long, fair pigtail. He had been lecturing on Town Planning to the Colchester Borough Council Management Summer School. In the end, curiously, we found it better to make Sticking concentrate on his spare-time fondness for arts. "Music is my real life," became the start of chapter six. He had a complete collection of Elgar, *The Ring*, and any works by the Big Six of the great Germans which were called on the label, whatever the facts, "posthumous." Sticking always wanted an audience for his music, and because we all liked him we stuck to a secret rota so that there were always two detailed to listen. But as he kept his gramophone in his bedder, and as it was of rather an old-fashioned make and would only take 78s, which were lying all over everything everywhere, it was difficult to move a step without making a sound like the delicate crunching of sea shells.

But those who expected bold attacks from Sticking were disappointed. If he wrote things about "the uniform of convention," it would mean that he had seen a lot of people wearing white ties at a performance of *Fidelio* at Covent Garden in 1936. He actually seemed to prefer, when he went to the theatre, going up the back stairs to a converted schoolroom in a district north of Camden Town with an unheard-of postal number. Later in his book he did rather well by describing a radio talk which he had suggested and which was "mysteriously turned down" by the B.B.C.

ODOREIDA presented a different problem. "Frankness is everything in autobiography," I had told my little band. "Right," said Odoreida, and began a series of recollections almost all of which, in spite of

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what I had said, simply had to be cut out. For instance, few people knew that he was nearly two terms at Oxford University before he was asked to leave. How did Odoreida get to Oxford? As a 1923 equivalent of a Displaced Person? Displaced from what? Did he himself invent the name of the "University of the Jamaican Dutch" which he "represented as part of the special student exchange 'Peace Across the Waters' agreement," something which "embodied surely one of the best of the Liberal movements floated after W.W.I.?" Or did Odoreida invent this phrase himself? Was Professor Gilbert Murray, who "was so gracious to me," really Odoreida's dupe? And even if not, does this make good autobiographical reading? Anyhow, most of us agreed that he couldn't possibly say he was sent down for the thing he was sent down for, because however frank the self-revelation, no one could ever possibly put that particular thing in a book, discreditable as it was in a way so uniquely combining the unpleasant and the uninteresting.

After a lot of discussion it was decided to suggest that the disciplining should follow some incident, which though true, was less derogatorily vapid. In the end, pointless as even this was, we advised Odoreida to record those days in Eights Week when he used to wear an Oxford "Blue" tie, though he was never a Blue nor the least fraction of one. This act was so astounding to some that they could not bring themselves to look squarely at the woolly, dark-blue tie and scarf Odoreida put on. When he was challenged Odoreida would not defend himself. He would say that he had always wanted to be able to wear the tie or ties: so as he was not given it, he bought one. We decided Odoreida should put this in his chapter on Oxford—"I Wake up the Spires." "No doubt the authorities," it ran, "no doubt the powers that be found it difficult to stomach this affront to tradition and 'correct' behaviour. They cut me out of their friendly activities, particularly their boating dinners. My attitude hardened. Had one of them come forward with one genuinely friendly gesture, one handshake which was really warm. . . ."

In the end we had to cut out so many of Odoreida's suggestions, including three complete chapters, that he became huffy and said he'd scrap the whole thing, which he did. Instead he wrote a long autobiographical novel containing a character simply called Querela Minge, quite obviously meant to be Eva Plimm, so that he could go for this girl as hard as he could and simply tear her to pieces. All this was because she had told Odoreida, when he tried to kiss her during some long train ride they had to take together down to H.Q., that his ears smelt like tarpaulin.

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LETTERS

"The Death of Hard News"

MR. CHARLES CURRAN'S article on "AOT in U.S.A." (May issue) contains errors on many points. He begins: "All generalisations about the United States tend to be corrupt." I am, instead, inclined to side with Tocqueville: it is American "facts" that are strangely plastic and flexible, while certain generalisations remain amazingly true and valid in this so-called "dynamic" and "changing" country.

Curran says that "the news-getting techniques of American TV are impressively good." To-day is Saturday. There was nothing on the TV news about the crisis in France that I have not read in the New York *Times* of yesterday, a paper composed and printed Thursday evening.

The American evening paper is not dull because it is the "main victim of TV"; it is dull because even to-day most of the interesting news comes from Europe, from Russia, from the Mediterranean and, because of the difference in time, this kind of news is first printed in the morning papers and announced on the morning radio.

The New York *Daily News,* says Mr. Curran, is the only non-radical tabloid in the world: "completely free from the self-pity and patronage inseparable from radicalism—which consists, essentially, in telling people that they are simpletons confronted by scoundrels." But this is exactly what the *Daily News* is doing. "The supply of columnists," Mr. Curran writes about the American press, "is great, but the demand is equally great." Yet there are reasons to believe that the great golden era of the commentator and columnist may be fading.

"Birth control and divorce have destroyed another great area of fear among the mass public. . . . In the climate of sexual freedom, the dragons have died, and many circulations are being buried in their graves." This is not only a curiously mixed metaphor, it is not true at all: the American sexual "revolution" (in itself, a bad term) occurred in the 'twenties; ever since the last war the American tendency is towards fewer divorces and larger families.

These are serious errors. Yet they should not detract attention from the central problem which Mr. Curran has proposed, though not solved. It is The Problem of News. In this so-called age of "lightning-speed news facilities," of "mass communication," to find out the news in America is extremely difficult. Having lived in Hungary during the last world war, like so many Europeans I know what it is to be thirsty for reliable news. In America, during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, I was struck by the slowness, by the incompetence, by the utter unreliability of American news about those so dramatic, so exciting events. Every two hours I ran into town to buy a paper; every hour I tried the radio. Except for the New York *Times* there was, generally speaking, nothing but cooked news, re-cooked news, pre-hashed news, rehashed news. I could find nothing; I could learn nothing; there weren't even fragments, those fragments from which the excited mind tries to deduce something significant. The radio news, with all of its famous "facilities"—teletype, news services, etc. —was usually eighteen hours behind the New York *Times*. Twirling the knobs wouldn't do; most American "independent" radio stations repeated the same news in the same words, using the same adjectives, filling the last twenty-five seconds with the same joke or the same "human-interest" story. After a couple of days I found that the best newscast came from a Canadian station, and I began to envy those friends of mine who had short-wave receivers.

My conclusions about the sources of this degeneration in the receipt and presentation of news in America are different from those of Mr. Curran: here they are for what they're worth. In my opinion, there are four causes for this degeneration: (1) The Static Concept of the News; (2) The Cooking of the News; (3) Magazines; (4) Experts.

The Static Concept of the News arises from the inability of people to understand that News means Change, and Significant Change. Our newsgatherers are the kind of people about whom Wilde wrote that they pursue the obvious with the enthusiasm of a short-sighted detective. They do not understand that such items as Fire in Brooklyn, Air Force Logs Ten Millionth Mile, City Official Speaks Against Corruption, Khrushchev Extols Communism in Policy Speech, 341,795 Persons Down With 'Flu, are usually *not* news, since they are continuations of what has been going on. If, on the other hand, the speech of the City Official signals a split in City Hall, if the increase in the 'flu cases is sudden, if the Khrushchev speech is sharp after a softening period, or the reverse, this *is* news. News, after all, is history. And history is the history of change, of movement. But this, to-day, is recognised but by a minority of historians, and by a tiny minority of news-gatherers.

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About the Cooking of the News I shall but refer to the masterly discussion of this problem by Sir Robert Ensor in his *England 1870–1914*, the sub-chapter on the Press Revolution, pages 310–316. Written more than two decades ago, this analysis remains valid and unsurpassed. (By a peculiar coincidence, Mr. Curran quotes Ensor in his article but, unfortunately, not from The Press Revolution.)

The problem of the Magazines is closely connected with the Cooking of the News. The most important thing in the magazines is that there the last decent pretences of separating News from Opinion are abandoned. Meanwhile, The Magazine develops in line with the tendency of our age for the means to devour the ends. Like the suburb, which was supposed to be a means between city and country and now threatens to devour both, the Magazine was supposed to be a means between the Newspaper and the Book and it is now devouring both. Far more Americans read *Time* Magazine (thinking that they get news there) than newspaper editorials. (On the other hand, consider how many books are written to-day for magazines first, and for book-publication only in the second place.)

The problem of the Experts and the Commentators is part and parcel of this now dreary practice of daily deceit, as millions of readers are getting Opinion disguised as Information. Curiously enough, the initial function now has been reversed: many readers read their favourite columnists not for their opinions but for those fragments of news (Drew Pearson's column is an example) which are not printed elsewhere.

At times I fear that we may have already passed into a transitional age of madness where the pronouncements of Experts are altogether separated from Reason. This is especially true of International Experts. Meanwhile, as I see beefy generals listening with awe to the latest strategic theories proposed by Central European refugee mathematicians who otherwise do not know the difference between a shotgun and a rifle, I wonder. Yet I, a Tory in opinion as well as in sentiment, am not inclined to share the present gloom of the intellectuals about The Voice of the People. From the silly optimism of the 'thirties about the Virtues of the Common Man the intellectuals have now slid into a sort of abysmal pessimism, saying that The People Are Idiots and that Mass Culture Is Death. There are signs, in this very America, that people may be more intelligent than the Opinion-Makers believe; and this is right now evident not only in the consumer habits of Americans during this recession but in the now steady decline of popular interest in Foreign Experts, Commentators, and even mass magazines. Unfortunately I believe that much time will pass and much harm will be done until publishers and network magnates realise this: for ideas, the realisations of new tendencies in this "dynamic" and "jet-speed" age, move remarkably slowly. Meanwhile, I agree with Mr. Curran that men such as Northcliffe were the chief villains of the Bourgeois Age. They have done enormous harm. Yet their achievements are transitory. They will not endure.

J. A. Lukacs

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

6

"Nothing-Land"

Some of your readers will no doubt have noticed that in my article in the July issue, I mistakenly gave the date of the German Peasants' War as 1522. It began, of course, in 1524; my apologies for the error.

Norman Birnbaum

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"Storm over the Gentry"

Professor Hexter is certainly to be congratulated on the variety of comments evoked by his article. As the critic of Professor Tawney's statistical methods whose work was used to some extent by Professor Hexter, is sneered at by Mr. Stone, ignored by Mr. Hinton, and censured by implication by the hero-worshipping Mr. Hill, perhaps I may be permitted a few comments.

Mr. Stone's tactics in this controversy resemble those of some sort of academic boa-constrictor which surrounds its victim and patron with tangled coils of imitative flattery and settles down to a life-long feast. When after a few years the meal proves hopelessly indigestible, it bravely announces that it prefers independence and will fend for itself, though still hoping that a few fragments may prove nutritious. Thus Mr. Stone continues to assure us that manors are meaningful units for comparisons of wealth. Yet in the 1620s the Earl of Northumberland had more than twice as many manors as the Earl of Devonshire, though his rental was the smaller of the two. Mr. Stone prefers to rely on a small sample of sales made in ten years as the criterion for valuing manors, a considerable proportion of which was never sold, over a period of eighty years. Even if experience encouraged us to have blind faith in Mr. Stone's judgment in such matters, there are still other difficulties. Both Mr. Hinton and Mr. Stone assume that the samples of manors are good because they are large. This is untrue, because the samples are geographically biased. Mr. Stone's is the larger and better, but it only includes one and a fraction of the counties north of the Wash, three counties south of the Thames. The south-west and East Anglia are not represented at all and the north is seriously under-represented. Manors were more numerous in some regions than in others. Are we entitled to assume that the proportions owned by peers were the same elsewhere as in this predominantly Midland and Thames Valley sample? Mr. Stone continues to ignore the fact that manors could be enormously increased in value by internal consolidation. We know that some owners bought in freeholds, checked or destroyed customary tenures, exploited parks or commons and so increased the value and area of their property within manors which they already owned. The method of counting manors cannot detect such increases.

Mr. Hinton says that this is the only evidence we have and Mr. Stone asserts that "to have any

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validity at all, conclusions about social movements must have a statistical basis." Before we accept the dogma that bad statistics are always to be preferred to none at all, we are entitled to suppose that their makers will be willing to apply some sort of test of consistency. Mr. Stone tells us that in the period 1558–1642 "the peerage had more than doubled in numbers, but its landed property had failed to increase." He also tells us that the landed income of a late Elizabethan peer was £2,000 to £3,000 a year and that between 1558–1602 the number of manors held by peers declined by about a third. As rents certainly rose in this period, if we put the average income of the 64 peers of 1559 at £3,000 a year, we may be overestimating it. If we assume that rents rose three-fold 1558–1642, the same amount of land as that held by the peerage in 1559 would yield £576,000 in 1642, thus giving the 124 peers of that date an average income of £4,650. There is reasonably reliable independent evidence to show that 35 peers in about 1,642 had an average landed income of £6,900 each which would give a total of £856,000 for the whole peerage. This sample may contain too many very rich peers, so by removing the three richest, we reach an average of £5,900 and a total of £732,000. Every effort has been made to favour Mr. Stone's thesis in making these estimates, but the result does not provide any corroboration for his inferences from counting manors. On the other hand these calculations are largely guesswork, except for the estimates of the average wealth of the peerage around 1642 and these may well be subject to revision.

It is possible that the average landed wealth of individual peers was less in 1642 than in 1559, but I would submit that there is still no good evidence that the total landed wealth of the peerage was less. Finally, as against Professor Hexter, I believe that if there had been more careful study of accounts and rentals in the first instance and less counting of manors, this controversy need never have taken its present form. In fairness to Mr. Stone I should add that, since his first incursion into the subject, he has devoted a great deal of time to such studies. I imagine that Mr. Stone and I can at least agree on the necessity for continuing such studies, instead of abandoning them, as Professor Hexter suggests.

J. P. Cooper

Trinity College
Oxford

"The Theatre on Trial"

I felt a little apprehensive as I embarked on yet another examination of the theatre—on trial again, poor sinner, and the familiar figures clamouring at the witness-stand. My fears, I think, were justified. Will you allow me to comment on Richard Roud's report?

Mr. Roud certainly managed to elicit some curious information. Mr. Hope-Wallace, one is appalled to discover, dislikes "the semi-informed critic" because—Lord save us—"he knows too much." Clearly Mr. Hope-Wallace expressed himself badly, but I have a horrid suspicion that he allowed himself to be surprised into a genuine admission. Both he and Mr. Tynan, in their different ways, seem to prefer the critic who is totally uninformed. Mr. Hope-Wallace, it appears, distrusts any critic who uses his own judgment ("Does the play capture the audience? That is the only criterion"); and he implies that anyone who admits the validity of moral criteria as applied to art is bound to prefer Harriet Beecher Stowe to Shakespeare. Mr. Tynan, contrariwise, feels that the critic should be true to himself and to no one else at all; he should not be "constructive"; his "only responsibility" is "personal"; he should "make the connections" between what he sees on the stage and what he sees in real life, even if this means identifying Caesar with Stalin. Thus while Mr. Hope-Wallace takes the view that any expression of personal opinion is bound to be irresponsible, Mr. Tynan welcomes personal opinion however irresponsible. Neither seems to envisage the possibility that criticism might express a responsible and informed opinion.

Mr. Hope-Wallace's view effectively prevents him from saying anything very much in the ensuing arguments. He says of Beckett's plays that "one has to draw the line somewhere," but this condemnation loses a little of its force when we learn just where Mr. Hope-Wallace proposes to draw the line. He is interested in theatre that can instantaneously capture seventy-five per cent of the audience; not surprisingly he finds it "a strangely coarse medium," as with this criterion he can only take cognizance of strangely coarse effects. Mr. Tynan, on the other hand, can adopt several attitudes. He bases his judgment on what is said, not how it is said—but he does not precisely explain his distinction. I sympathise with his aversion for "wog-flogging, flag-wagging, anti-Semitism" and the rest, but when he says that he detests a play "imbued" with these qualities "no matter how well it is written," he is surely not taking himself or his subject sufficiently seriously. He ought to be able to say that a play that runs down Jews and does nothing else is a bad and a badly-written play; and that a well-written play is a different sort of thing altogether, whether it is occasioned by anti-Semitism or any other *ism* at all. But Mr. Tynan, for all his dogmatism, evades the issue, for he will only give his convictions personal validity. He castigates theatre-goers because there are so few of them, but as far as he is concerned the actors are playing to an audience of one.

Mr. Worsley holds himself aloof from these arguments, but seems equally reluctant to come to grips with reality. He professes a vague preference for plays that discuss contemporary life, but is perfectly prepared to welcome plays that don't. Only when he is faced with *Fin de Partie* and *The Chairs* is he shaken from his noncommittal attitude—how depressing they are! "Isn't despair all wrong?" he pathetically asks, and compares this Parisian malaise unfavourably with our own thoroughly healthy activities. M. Ionesco's phrase about a "théâtre de boy-scout" seems very apposite.

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As for Mr. Roud, he might have been excused for holding himself aloof, as he has the rôle of interrogator; but he does not do so. He seemed to be about to say that doctrine and didacticism are of secondary importance in the theatre, that theatrical art is not political or philosophic discussion; and I prepared to applaud. Alas, what he finally did say was that so few people take any notice of the theatre nowadays that it doesn't much matter what goes on there; and that consequently pernicious doctrine is as permissible as any other sort in the world of the theatre.

I will admit that my reading of the testimony submitted has not been charitable. It is, moreover, clear that the set of questions put to the witnesses, questions which you, Sirs, helped to formulate, did not encourage responsible answers. All the critics involved in this sad affair can admittedly do rather better than this. But although one can excuse a few inanities, it is more difficult to excuse the total absence of any attempt at serious or constructive thought. One would have expected someone, on such an occasion, to talk about the nature of theatrical art, and to try to describe the kind of truth that can be captured in the theatre. This surely is what matters: the relevant question about a play or a performance is not whether it is gay or depressing, pro-Tory or anti-Semitic, but whether it contains dramatic truth. Every play imposes some vision of life, and the better plays in the repertory give us new insights into the nature of our human state. It is the job of the critic to recognise truth when he sees it, to ask himself whether an insight is honest, whether it is communicated without falsification. The best critic of any play is the critic with the most delicately developed sense of its particular kind of truth and its particular kind of self-deception, sentimentality, or dishonesty. . . .

JENS ARUP

Middleton Moor
Nr. Saxmundham, Suffolk

THE crux of the matter surely is one's attitude to Beckett. In *Encore* 6 O'Casey described "Waiting for Godot" as "a brilliant and rotting work of art." In my opinion "Godot" is deplorable but not on these "let-out" grounds so astonishingly shared by the critics interviewed for they betray an attitude to works of art that is basically as barbarous and intolerant as it is illegitimate and logically untenable.

It is not the philosophy "message" or attitude to life revealed in "Godot" that can be held against its author any more than the Wessex novels can be vitiated *qua* novels because of Hardy's "pessimism." *Les Fleurs du Mal* have not become dead weeds because their author's attitude to life was essentially detrimental, decadent, and debauchery-soaked. An artist has a right to any attitude towards life he chooses, to any mood whatsoever provided his genius is hereby fertilised and the results truly creative and memorable. What does in fact make "Godot" dustbin fodder of the first order is its

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technical naïveté, its misty failure to communicate, its deliberate and almost insulting adoption of a moronic mode of dialogue. It is in fact nothing but a piece of slovenly, pretentious, facile, exhibitionistically nihilistic nonsense. Rotting matter can have phosphorescent appeal; "Godot" is just pure irredeemable rot. If it is true (p. 31 of your July number) that "the intellectual world both here and in France . . . agrees by and large" that Beckett is "one of the most important avant-garde writers of to-day," this, if not enough in itself to condemn him—a big if, is just another instance of the inadequacy of the species "intellectual", particularly the creature who goes by that name to-day. Furthermore, the very fact that it is necessary in the year 1958 to argue the primacy of æsthetic values (called with typical naïve contemporary confusion "style" by Mr. Tynan *loc. cit.* p. 28) in matters essentially æsthetic should show even the most infatuatedly blind the vale of neo-decadence into which we have strayed.

GEORGE RICHARDS

Poole
Dorset

Mill on Hungary

THE recent news from Hungary illustrates the unfortunate timeliness of reflections on non-intervention and the Hungarian revolution—of 1848—written by John Stuart Mill ninety-nine years ago. His warning is so ominous and so fitting to the situation of 1958 that I should like to communicate it to your readers:

"The doctrine of non-intervention, to be a legitimate principle of morality, must be accepted by all governments. The despots must consent to be bound by it as well as the free States. Unless they do, the profession of it by free countries comes but to this miserable issue, that the wrong side may help the wrong, but the right must not always help the right. Intervention to enforce non-intervention is always rightful, always moral, if not always prudent. Though it be a mistake to *give* freedom to a people who do not value the boon, it cannot but be right to insist that if they do value it, they shall not be hindered from the pursuit of it by foreign coercion.

"It might not have been right for England (even apart from the question of prudence) to have taken part with Hungary in its noble struggle against Austria; although the Austrian Government in Hungary was in some sense a foreign yoke. But when, the Hungarians having shown themselves likely to prevail in this struggle, the Russian despot interposed, and joining his force to that of Austria, delivered back the Hungarians, bound hand and foot, to their exasperated oppressors, it would have been an honourable and virtuous act on the part of England to have declared that this should not be, and that if Russia gave assistance to the wrong side, England would aid the right. It might not have been consistent with the regard which every nation is bound to pay to its own safety, for England to have taken up this position single-handed. But England and France together could have done it; and if they had, the Russian armed intervention would never have taken place, or would have been disastrous to Russia alone: while all that those Powers gained by not doing it, was that they had to fight Russia five years afterwards, under more difficult circumstances, and without Hungary for an ally. The first nation which, being powerful enough to make its voice effectual, has the spirit and courage to say that not a gun shall be fired in Europe by the soldiers of one Power against the revolted subjects of another, will be the idol of the friends of freedom throughout Europe. That declaration alone will ensure the almost immediate emancipation of every people which desires liberty sufficiently to be capable of maintaining it: and the nation which gives the word will soon find itself at the head of an alliance of free peoples, so strong as to defy the efforts of any number of confederated despots to bring it down. The prize is too glorious not to be snatched sooner or later by some free country; and the time may not be distant when England, if she does not take this heroic part because of its heroism, will be compelled to take it from consideration for her own safety."

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BOOKS

The Human Coefficient

HUMAN beings have a "drive" to make themselves at home in the world. This drive they share with animals, but they are distinguished by their vastly superior equipment (mostly acquired) for solving the problems presented by the world; among which equipment is language and the ability to formulate general concepts and explore the relations between them. Learning about the world is to be understood as seeking to satisfy this primordial drive. Much of it is centred upon contriving material conditions believed to be desirable; but to this has been added a desire for intellectual understanding, an effort to discover the nature of the world or to construct an intellectually satisfying account of it. Nevertheless, this urge to satisfy ourselves intellectually is not purely egocentric. We seek a satisfaction which can win universal assent, and we remain dissatisfied until we have persuaded others of our understanding of the world. What we call "scientific knowledge" is the most remarkable example of this effort and consequently it may be taken as an emblem of the whole enterprise.

Some such view as this seems to be the starting point of Professor Polanyi's book* (the outcome of his Gifford Lectures), and its chief aim is to provide a more satisfactory account of scientific knowledge (and thus of human knowledge in general) than we have hitherto enjoyed. It is a book full of side-glances into other matters; it is disordered, repetitive, digressive, and often obscure; as a work of art it leaves much to be desired. There are long passages (some of them among the digressions) which move easily and are unencumbered with the flotsam of extraneous observation, and there are short passages where a proposition is demonstrated with supreme neatness and elegance; but Professor Polanyi's ambition to let nothing go by default, to surround his argument with an embroidery, not of qualification but of elaboration, and to follow his theme into every variation that suggests itself, makes the book like a jungle through which the reader must hack his way. Nevertheless, there is a central theme which is never quite lost sight of, a sustained and powerful argument in which a theory of scientific knowledge is elucidated (illustrated and supported by continuous references to the history of modern science) in opposition to what Professor Polanyi believes to be the current and erroneous theory.

In this current theory (to which all the "critical" philosophers of modern times have made a contribution) the enterprise of the scientist is understood to be the achievement of a purely "objective" account of the world, an account from which personal judgments and preferences and moral valuations have been rigorously excluded. This ideal of "scientific detachment" in research and achievement is thought to be a noble and not impossible enterprise, a longed-for emancipation from the shifting sands of merely speculative opinion. And it is understood to require the scientist to proceed upon an empirical method of enquiry in which each of his assertions springs from and represents actual observations or calculated probabilities, and in which the virtue of a general scientific theory is found in the "simplicity" or the "economy" with which it comprehends known facts.

Professor Polanyi has three important observations to make about this theory of scientific knowledge. First, the empiricism it desiderates has never in fact been the accepted method of scientific research and verification and is misunderstood in this theory: in fact, scientific reflection does not begin with observations or with hypotheses about what might be observed if it were looked for, and "it is not the case that a proven discrepancy between theoretical predictions and observed data suffices to invalidate a theory." Consequently, the representation of general scientific theories as the economical comprehension of verified observations is a misunder-

* *Personal Knowledge*. By MICHAEL POLANYI. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 42s.

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standing of their character. Secondly, the moral neutrality advocated in this theory has no counterpart in the activity of scientists which has everywhere unavoidably exhibited moral convictions. And thirdly, not only is this theory a misdescription of what in fact goes on in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, but it is more deeply erroneous on account of its neglect of an essential element of the situation: this element Professor Polanyi calls "the personal element." Thus, the expression "personal knowledge" denotes not (as might be hastily supposed) a certain kind of knowledge, but a coefficient in all knowledge; and Professor Polanyi's enterprise is to exhibit it as a component of what we call "scientific knowledge" (from which the current theory specifically banishes it) and in this manner to elucidate a more satisfactory theory of scientific knowledge.

The argument (as I understand it) turns on the recognition of "science," not as a body of information about the world, but as an activity of discovering. It is an historic activity in the sense that its directions of interest and its standards of relevance and achievement are not laid down in advance as the necessary and sufficient conditions of its pursuit, but have been elicited from the manners and practices of scientists at work; they represent a consensus which has come to be accepted and which determines by tacit acceptance what is and what is not to be regarded as "scientific"—a consensus stable enough to afford this guidance but never immune from detailed modification. Strictly speaking, scientific enquiry has no premisses, and it operates according to no hard and fast rules. Scientific knowing is a skilful activity; it involves a connoisseurship which may be learned in practice but which is always impossible to specify exactly or to make "objective" in a set of rules. Scientific enquiry begins not in naïve observation of the world but in the current state of scientific explanation; and it consists in exploring the clues and intimations which this situation offers to those whose understanding of it gives them the power of moving freely within it. At the outset, then, a "personal judgment" is required in (out of all those which offer themselves) selecting the clues to follow, a judgment in which the interests and even the moral values of the scientist are involved. Before he comes to distinguish betwen the true and the false, he must learn to distinguish between the important and the trivial, between competent and incompetent scientific enquiry; and in doing so he is guided, not by a specific set of precepts eligible for mechanical application, but by his own acceptance of and participation in the unspecifiable consensus of scientific opinion. In short, when the obscuring clouds of empirical theory are swept away, belief and trust (and not doubt and distrust) are revealed as the parents of scientific enquiry: *nisi crediderit is, non intelligitis.* "The scientist pursuing an enquiry ascribes impersonal status to his standards and his claims, because he regards them as impersonally established by science. But his submission to scientific standards for the appraisal and guidance of his efforts is the *only sense* in which these standards can be said to pre-exist, or even to exist at all, for him. No one can know universal intellectual standards, except by acknowledging their jurisdiction over himself as part of the terms on which he holds himself responsible for the pursuit of his mental efforts."

But further, a "personal coefficient" is not only involved psychologically in the activity of knowing and the art of understanding, it is involved also, logically, in the structure of the conclusions a scientist reaches and the statements he makes. "The meaning of all our utterances is determined to an important extent by a skilful act of our own—the act of knowing . . . and the acceptance of any of our own utterances as true involves our approval of our own skill. To affirm anything implies to this extent an appraisal of our own art of knowing and the establishment of truths becomes decisively dependent upon a set of personal criteria of our own which cannot be formally defined." Moreover, "unless assertion of fact is accompanied by some heuristic or persuasive feeling, it is a mere form of words saying nothing. Any attempt to eliminate this personal coefficient by laying down precise rules for making or testing assertions of fact, is condemned to futility from the start. For we can derive rules of observation and verification only from examples of factual statements that we have accepted as true *before* we know these rules; and *in the end* the application of our rules will necessarily fall back once more on factual observations, the acceptance of which is an act of personal judgment, unguided by any explicit rules."

These are only a small sample of the numerous arguments by which Professor Polanyi hopes to establish the personal coefficient in scientific knowledge. But to call for the recognition of this component is not itself to have formulated a theory of scientific knowledge. And Professor Polanyi understands it to leave him in a dilemma. Absolute "objectivity" has been denied to scientific knowledge at the cost, it would seem, of a threatened subsidence into "subjectivism." Many pages are devoted to extricating himself from this dilemma, but I confess I do not know with what final success. It is, it will be remembered, a problem which engaged the reflective powers of Hegel and which he solved

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in terms of the concept of the concrete universal; and in this book, although there is no overt reference to Hegel, there are many Hegelian echoes, and its argument might have been improved if these echoes were more explicit. "I think," says Professor Polanyi, "we may distinguish between the personal in us, and our subjective states, in which we merely endure our feelings. This distinction establishes the *personal*, which is neither subjective nor objective. In so far as the personal submits to requirements acknowledged by itself as independent of itself, it is not subjective; but in so far as it is an action guided by individual passions, it is not objective either. It transcends the disjunction between subjective and objective." But, perhaps, Polanyi's solution to this problem is Platonic rather than Hegelian. He recognises "rationality" as the mark of truth in a scientific theory (in other passages this mark is identified with the intellectual beauty of the theory) and in the end a belief that our thoughts are moved by "an innate affinity for making contact with reality" seems to be the only premiss, properly speaking, of scientific enquiry and the means by which it transcends merely personal conviction. But, be that how it may, we are left in no doubt that the theory of scientific knowledge with which Professor Polanyi wishes to equip us is as little sceptical as it is positivistic. And, so far as the quality of the performance goes, it may perhaps be said that Professor Polanyi doesn't do as much scepticism for himself as might have been hoped and as the occasion seems to demand. At the edges of his argument there is a suspicion of philosophical innocence.

In short, these Gifford Lectures may be recognised as a passionate and profound attack upon empiricism in its stronghold—the theory of scientific enquiry. The plan of campaign has been deeply reflected, and though it lacks a certain elegance, its details are clearly conceived. Its execution is relentless; Professor Polanyi has lived with his opponent long enough to know him intimately and to make no mistake about the disposition of the forces against him; his demotion of empiricism from a method to a maxim calling for interpretation in application is shrewdly done; but, like Nelson, his object is rather annihilation than an indecisive *mêlée*. As in all philosophical encounters, exactly what has been demolished and what remains standing is a little uncertain; the slain have a disconcerting way of rising from the dead to fight another action.

There are many exciting passages in this engagement which have had to go unnoticed, but in this place it is proper to mention two of them. First, Professor Polanyi believes that there is a "civic coefficient" to the intellectual passions

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proper to scientific enquiry. Science depends upon an allegiance to the values which have emerged in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, but this allegiance must always be uncertain in a society not disposed to recognise them. The counterpart proper to scientific enquiry he calls a "free society" and by this he means a society which is not static in its moral and intellectual outlook, one which is not "authoritarian" in its structure and operation, and one which is not disposed to assimilate scientific enquiry to technological achievement. Secondly, attention should be drawn to the last chapter of the book. Here controversy is left behind. It is a vision of the natural history of mankind, brilliantly imagined and expressed in sentences of uninflated eloquence.

Michael Oakeshott

The Non-Confucian State

Chinese Thought and Institutions. Edited by John K. Fairbank, University of Chicago Press. $8.50. London: *Cambridge University Press*. 64s.

KARL WITTFOGEL'S brilliant work, *Oriental Despotism*, delineated the general structure of the ancient Asian empires. Now, closer studies of individual societies are needed to illuminate the exact nature of their bureaucratic dictatorships and to provide further evidence for the parallels Wittfogel drew between them and modern Communist totalitarianism. China will probably be the first country to be thus documented. American sinologists in particular are very conscious of the need for a new, overall appraisal of Chinese history, and this collection of thirteen scholarly essays is designed to serve as part of the essential monographic background to any such synthesis.

The essays do not conform to any pattern; subject and time range from Hellmut Wilhelm's brief but illuminating study of the political import of the *"fu"* poems under the early Han (206 B.C. to A.D. 9) to a penetrating essay by the editor on the reaction of the scholar-bureaucrats to the encroachments of the Europeans in the 19th century. Their homogeneity stems from the fact that they all deal with the Confucian bureaucracy and its ideology, both of which played a decisive rôle in the governing of China for over 2,000 years.

The link between bureaucracy and ideology was, of course, vital to the structure of a Confucian State. By asserting the natural inequality of man, Confucianism justified a division of society into two main strata, the rulers and the ruled. The *"chün-tzu"* or superior men devoted themselves to the conduct of state affairs, while the *"hsiao-jen"* or small men—the peasants, the artisans, and the merchants—performed the essential physical labour that kept the economy going. Confucius (551 B.C. to A.D. 479) was however evolving his ideas some three hundred years before the decaying feudal structure of the Chou was replaced by a centralised empire. Under Chou feudalism, status was assigned by birth; the son of a *chün-tzu* was also a *chün-tzu*. Confucius was fully aware that such a system could not guarantee that the ruling class would be composed of those he considered most fitted to rule, the virtuous and the wise; and his own linking of merit and position—the ethical basis of Confucian political philosophy—is (as T'ung-tsu Ch'u points out in his essay on "Chinese Class Structure and its Ideology") the major discrepancy between Confucian theory and the feudal institutions which it lauded.

It took some centuries before the principle of merit was securely established as the main criterion for membership in the ruling class. The practice followed by the Confucian scholars of educating worthy *hsiao-jen* had little effect; the deciding factor was the final decay of feudal institutions and the establishment of an empire whose efficiency perforce depended on the quality of its administrators. The *"fu"* poems of early Han times reveal the concern of the scholars to stabilise their position as the new ruling class. But although the principle was accepted under the Han, it was not given final expression in institutional form until the establishment of a regular examination system under the Sui (A.D. 581–618) and the T'ang (A.D. 618–907).

Since this principle was the moral justification for the enormous differences in status and wealth between rulers and ruled, it is important to know how effective the examination system was in promoting social mobility. Certain groups such as prostitutes, strolling players, and beggars were debarred from taking the examinations; but what possibility was there for the *hsiao-jen* proper, the vast majority of the population, of gaining access to the ruling few?

Mr. Kracke's careful analysis of the ancestry of Sung officials, while based on incomplete statistics, suggests that the bureaucracy was fairly inbred. At periods of economic expansion when the population was rising, the bureaucracy probably recruited a high proportion of its members from the families of the wealthy merchants of the south-east coast. But even in the most prosperous times, the material resources of the state were never such as to support a wide network of government schools which alone could provide an equal opportunity for the sons of peasants.

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Confucian reformers were not unaware that universal education was the essential bulwark of a truly Confucian bureaucracy vigorously renewing itself. The 17th-century philosopher Huang Tsung-hsi (whose ideas are outlined by W. T. de Bary) wished to see schools established down to the village level, supported but not controlled by the state. But on the whole, reformers concerned with "rectifying" a degenerating bureaucracy concentrated more on improving the method of selection than on increasing the numbers from which the selection took place.

Both Huang Tsung-hsi and the Sung reformer Fan Chung-yen (A.D. 989–1052) advocated a widening of the examination curriculum to include works more practical than the traditional literary classics. Fan Chung-yen (discussed by James T. C. Liu), who had worked his way up through the examination system, wished too for some curtailment of the "*yin*" system of appointment by which every year thousands of relatives of officials bypassed the examination system.

But while a degenerate bureaucracy spelled disaster, even a virtuous one could only function efficiently if the emperor permitted. If the latter was interested only in his personal pleasures, power fell into the hands not of the bureaucracy but of the palace officials and eunuchs. In the case of the Ming emperor Hsi-tsung (A.D. 1620–1627) this led to the slaughter of many of the Confucian reformers of the Tung-lin (Eastern Forest) Academy by the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien. (This episode is discussed by Charles O. Hucker.)

The linchpin of a Confucian state should have been the Sage Emperor, whose absolute powers were sanctioned by his absolute merit. Here again the bureaucrats were up against the hereditary principle which Confucius, as a supporter of feudal institutions, never explicitly rejected. The emperors were prepared to select their officials on a basis of merit, but not to allow the throne to pass out of their family. Nor were Confucian reformers able to establish the convention that the sole function of the ruler was to appoint virtuous bureaucrats. There is no need to stress the fact that possession of absolute power by a ruling bureaucracy is hardly a guarantee of justice and efficiency; but it is normally preferable to absolute rule by one man. And in the case of China, it would seem that one of the major causes of periodic dynastic decline was the cleavage between the absolute powers of the hereditary emperor and the merely dependent powers of the bureaucracy. But for the hereditary principle, a Stalinist emperor might have been succeeded by a Khrushchevian one.

To the true Confucian, however, the degeneration of a royal family was proof not so much of the evil effects of this principle, but of the basic wrongness of the whole structure of the state. He deplored the very centralisation to which the Confucian bureaucracy owed its position and influence. Indeed, when the founder of the Sui dynasty sought ideological justification for reuniting the country under his rule, he turned to Buddhism not Confucianism. ("The formation of Sui ideology" is discussed by Arthur F. Wright.)

The reason for this anomaly lies again in the fact that Confucius lived at a time when the unsettled state of China was clearly due to the decline of the feudal Chou empire. He preached the restoration of Chou institutions as the only safeguard of stability. And Huang Tsung-hsi, living over two thousand years after Confucius and eighteen hundred years after the centralisation of the empire under Ch'in, exemplified the endurance of this political philosophy when he wrote: "Unless we take a long-range view and look deep into the heart of the matter, changing everything completely until the ancient order is restored with its land system, feudal system, educational and military systems, then, even though minor changes are made, there will never be an end to the misery of the common man."

Possibly the Confucians would have made

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their peace with the centralised empire in theory as well as in practice if its establishment had not been associated with the persecution of themselves and the proscription of their works. But the real problem, not dealt with in these essays, is how Confucianism came to be adopted as the official dogma of a centralised State. How did the Confucian Tung Chung-shu persuade the Han emperor Wu-ti to take the vital step of recruiting Confucians as officials to the exclusion of the other schools?

Possibly the Legalists, upon whose theories the centralised empire was founded, were discredited by the violence with which the first Ch'in emperor followed their precepts. The noted historian of Chinese philosophy Fung Yu-lan has suggested that since, even under Wu-ti, the institutional pattern of the villages was still that of the Chou period, the Confucians with their reverence for and knowledge of Chou institutions were considered the best-equipped to act as administrators. Possibly further research will reveal that, from pure weight of numbers, the Confucians represented the best reservoir of talent available to the emperor.

Those who follow Wittfogel in seeking a new sociology of class based on relationship to the state apparatus will have to account for this odd phenomenon of a ruling group working for a state it abhorred and a state buttressed by an ideology that contradicted its basic institutions.

Roderick MacFarquhar

Novels

Two Women. By ALBERTO MORAVIA. Secker and Warburg. 18s.
The Fire of Milan. By RICCARDO BACCHELLI. Secker and Warburg. 18s.
Robinson. By MURIEL SPARK. Macmillan. 12s. 6d.
Clerks in Lowly Orders. By STUART MITCHELL. Gollancz. 13s. 6d.
The Branding Iron. By PAUL-ANDRÉ LESORT. Collins. 10s. 6d.

THE jacket of Moravia's new novel to appear in English (translated by Angus Davidson), though grotesquely inaccurate in detail, is an admirable commentary on the book; indeed, you might suppose the publishers unkindly anxious to caricature in it the most overrated novelist of our time. It bears a large photograph of two heads, intended to be those of the mother and daughter who figure in the novel; and it hardly matters that they look quite unlike the two women as Moravia describes them (Cesira, the narrator, describes herself as having hair that grows almost down to her eyes, whereas on the jacket she shows a high handsome forehead; Rosetta, her daughter, is described as looking like a little sheep, with a receding chin and very curly fair hair, whereas the photograph shows a square-faced girl with aggressively straight black hair): what matters is that it is a dramatically lit, striking, glossy photograph, the kind of thing that might very well appear in a sophisticated magazine, and that all those words (dramatic, striking, glossy, sophisticated) are just the epithets I would apply to the novel, a piece of clever trick photography wholly removed from life, with the shiny professionalised feelings of the novelist who seems to have been polished almost to extinction as a human being.

Two Women is the story of a grocer's widow who, with her young daughter, leaves Rome at the end of the war when food gets scarce, and spends some months, suffering volubly, among the peasants of her native district. Loud-mouthed, self-opinionated, and monumentally tedious, her narrative has certainly caught the platitudinous, sanctimonious, energetic flow of the ignorant Italian in full conversational spate; and if you can stand the sort of loquacity that so often assails you on—say—a long Italian train journey, then perhaps you can bear with the book: not otherwise. Myself, I found Cesira, with her crabbed commercial judgments, her utter cynicism, her everlasting fuss about discomforts and her whole slumlike soul, so repulsive that 350-odd pages in her company were hard going. But maybe, I thought, she's real, true, accurate: until I suddenly stumbled on something I could check myself, that set me wondering about the accuracy of much of the rest. "Our chief trouble," says Cesira, describing their wartime difficulties with food (all brought about, incidentally, because she sold all she had in the shop for exorbitant black-market prices), "was lack of salt." Now listen carefully, for this is the sort of thing you might easily overlook in a text full of moans about the horror of eating little but goat (I ate goat in Majorca, and perfectly good it was): "Food without salt," Cesira goes on, "is almost impossible to swallow, and as soon as you put it in your mouth you begin to want to vomit, so tasteless is it, with a kind of sweetness like that of something dead and decayed." I once spent a month with friends when one of them was on a diet that forbade salt. As they were busy people and rather indifferent to food, we all ate the same, completely saltless dishes. They were rather flavourless, but *that was all*. All this business about vomiting, about sweetness, deadness, and decay, is, I can say quite definitely, complete nonsense; and it makes me wonder about the validity of so much of Moravia's realism, if he can inflate some trifling discomfort into a major disaster.

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Then Cesira is a woman; and Moravia has never, even in *The Woman of Rome*, managed to write convincingly in the person of a woman. His eyes, his point of view, what he notices or omits, his whole outlook, are all masculine, and the fact that he calls his mouthpiece feminine only makes her, at times, appear incestuous. A mother may passionately love her daughter, but she will hardly look at her, describe her, describe her feelings for her, as Cesira does. When Adriana describes her own body on the first page of *The Woman of Rome* she is not looking at it as a girl of twenty views herself, but as a man would. Cesira's eyes, in the same way, are Moravia's.

The war goes on, with spasmodic violence, around the two fugitives; till finally the saintly Rosetta is raped and becomes, in her mother's words, a "mindless, apathetic whore." (Cesira steals from a corpse, too, which horrifies her; but it struck me as only too likely: even in her prosperous days she refused to bury her husband in the suit he had particularly asked for, and wrapped him in an old sheet.) The rape scene (in a church, of course) is described with extreme clarity, with all that high-coloured precision so easily mistaken for brilliance; and it is wholly unmoving. There is a lack of tenderness so complete that pathos, sympathy, compassion, have no place there: only a ruthless photographic realism harder, neater, shinier than life. Mercifully, one can get other views of the war in Italy and what led up to it—from Natalia Ginsberg's wonderful panoramic *Dead Yesterdays*, from that remarkable young novelist Italo Calvino, from Giorgio Bassani—in novels that really throw light on the whole shame and tragedy. *Two Women*, to my mind, throws no light at all on anything, except a searchlight glare on one small squalid soul that knows nothing, like the old man in *1984* who remembered ancient history in terms of personal trivialities. "Probably the outstanding European novelist writing today," say the publishers. Hm.

The Fire of Milan (translated by Kathleen Nott) is another novel about the war in Italy, and very odd it is, though a lot more likeable. Here seems to be a thoroughly old-fashioned (in the sense of outworn, outmoded) talent trying to manage a contemporary situation with a strange technique that sometimes brings in "real" people, like Croce or Marconi, and writes most of the second half of the book in dialogue, very stilted stuff, with exits, entrances, eavesdroppings, and dramatic arrivals in a manner that recalls Henry Arthur Jones. The partisans, the beautiful widow, the German captain, the wicked spy, the skeleton found stabbed in the back, the whole *Measure for Measure* situation: this *could* all have existed in and near Milan (at a place with the ghoulish name of Alma Dannata), but, the way the book deals with it, you never believe it did. There are large numbers of political, social, and local allusions that must puzzle English-speaking readers, but a breadth and geniality that somehow manage to come across.

Muriel Spark is one of the few writers with what you might call a really rum imagination, who yet manages to seem quite unaffected about it. Her *Robinson* is the tale, so lightly symbolic that you tend to forget its symbolism, of an aeroplane crash on an island, not quite but almost deserted, owned by a recluse called Robinson; and it is all so airily, unforcedly witty that you not only admire but smile, as much with pleasure as amusement. I wish I knew what it was all about: its meaning, like much in Miss Spark's writing, escapes me like some graceful creature gliding away at the approach of my heavy boots.

Heavy boots again, but pleasant ones, are those of *Clerks in Lowly Orders*, an office jape about a missing file and a purged Civil Servant (in that order of importance), and the small departmental frictions, loyalties, affections, and trivialities—mostly these—that keep the wheels turning at the Ministry of Technology and Automation. Facetiousness creeps in occasionally, but in the

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style more than the spirit; the social gradings, horizontal and vertical, are almost exquisitely accurate, and the whole depressing picture of daily life in the Civil Service is made funny, lively, even touching.

The Branding Iron is a performance, a look-no-hands ride round on a well-oiled machine; the working out, in fictional form, of an idea too precariously, self-consciously balanced between fact and madness. The sensibility that made *The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth* so piercingly and almost painfully exact has toppled into abnormality and would need the uncompromising harshness of a Mauriac to bring it alive. The whole novel is the letter of a woman writing to a husband she thinks she adores and, as she writes the letter, gradually comes to hate—a perfectly possible process, but far too neatly and foreseeably dealt with. Instead of the irrational waywardness of life, it has the predictable exactness of a crossword puzzle, a strict logic of memory, motive, and behaviour that manages to be disturbing but hardly ever convincing: casebook stuff, not fiction. Antonia White's translation is, as always, superbly sensitive and unforced. Since whatever merits the book has depend almost entirely on its style, in a narrow sense, the translator's rôle is especially important this time.

Isabel Quigly

Vietnam

The Smaller Dragon: A Political History of Vietnam. By Joseph Buttinger. *Frederick A. Praeger*, New York. $6.00.

The author of this book in a lengthy Foreword explains how he came to write it. He went to Vietnam, he tells us, in October, 1954, on behalf of the International Rescue Committee, an American voluntary agency engaged in assistance for refugees; at that time, shortly after the Geneva Agreement which handed over North Vietnam to the Communist-controlled Vietminh, the prospects of the Nationalist Government headed by Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam were considered to be extremely poor. Mr. Buttinger, however, was so much impressed by what he saw of the new Vietnamese national spirit and so convinced that the Vietnamese people had followed Communist leadership only in order to be rid of the French that on his return to the United States he became a zealous propagandist for the Diem régime. This led him to study the history of Vietnam and he became aware that no general history of the country existed in the English language; the standard French accounts he considered unsatisfactory because of their bias in favour of the French conquest. He decided, therefore, to write a history of Vietnam himself, and the present volume carries the story to the beginning of the 20th century; we are promised a second volume on recent events and the current situation. It would perhaps have been better if he had kept strictly to this division, but the volume now published has a final chapter entitled "Vietnam since 1900: a Summary and Chronology," in which the author's notebooks appear to have been hurriedly emptied on to the printed page without any attempt at an ordered narrative. The earlier chapters, on the other hand, present a comprehensive and well-balanced survey of Vietnamese history from its legendary beginnings to the consolidation of French rule, and have certainly made a contribution of value to the growing body of historical literature on South-east Asia.

Vietnamese history falls into three main periods: a thousand years of Chinese rule from 111 B.C. to A.D. 939; nine centuries of independence (broken by a brief restoration of Chinese rule early in the 15th century) from 939 to 1883; and French rule from 1883. Before 111 B.C. the Vietnamese, inhabiting the valley and delta of the Red River, were part of a kingdom called Nam Viet, which had its centre in the region of the modern Canton. Mr. Buttinger raises the question why it was that the Vietnamese survived as a distinct people and eventually regained their independence from China while the other non-Chinese peoples to the north and north-east of them were either absorbed by the Chinese or driven into isolated mountain tracts. The answer seems to be that Tongking was relatively secluded from the streams of Chinese settlement spreading south from the middle Yangtse; it was conquered, but not settled, by the Chinese, and came to have a dense population which was deeply influenced by Chinese civilisation but retained its own language and national tradition. The Vietnamese took advantage of the confusion in China following the end of the Tang dynasty to throw off the Chinese yoke, and in later centuries they expanded to the south along the coastal plain between the mountains and the sea at the expense of the Chams and the Cambodians—peoples whose higher culture had been derived, not from China, but from India—making the territory they gained their own ethnically as well as politically. To-day Vietnam is the most populous of the six countries of the South-east Asian mainland, with 24 million inhabitants as compared with 20 million in Siam and 19 million in Burma.

In modern times the history of Vietnam has been largely the story of French enterprises and invasions there. Mr. Buttinger is an unsparing

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critic of French, and indeed of every form of Western, colonialism, which arouses in him a moral indignation not extended to Vietnam's own conquests of Chams or Cambodians. The tale of French expansion in the Far East is indeed one of violence and intrigue which can be represented as either romantic or deplorable according to the standards by which it is judged. All the Western nations which penetrated into Asian waters from the time of Vasco da Gama onwards were ready to resort to force against one another or against the native authorities in order to eliminate competition or obstacles to trade. In the 17th century the French were rivals of the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English for the inconsiderable commerce obtainable in the ports of Vietnam, but the special French concern with Indo-China was the result of French success in gaining the patronage of Catholic missionary work there from 1658. An English agent in Hanoi at the time wrote that "we cannot make out whether they [the French] are here to seek trade or to conduct religious propaganda." More than a century later a French missionary was able to acquire an important political influence in Vietnam by bringing French military mercenaries to take part in a Vietnamese civil war which ended in the victory of his *protégé*. The complications of the wars of the French Revolution prevented France from taking full advantage of the opportunities thus created, and the new dynasty in Vietnam, when once firmly established, sought to isolate itself completely from European contacts and to eliminate the foreign religion. The momentary achievement of Pigneau de Béhaine, however, became an inspiring legend for French naval officers in the Far East during the 19th century; the admirals were already pressing proposals for intervention in Vietnam on Guizot during the 'forties, but it was only in 1857, when Napoleon III became a convert to their views, that they were at last given their head.

Mr. Buttinger gives a good account of the old Vietnamese mandarinate, which was closely imitated from the Chinese model, but he fails to appreciate the extent to which not only the system of government but also the policies of seclusion and suppression of Christianity were inspired by the example of China. The action which established the French in Vietnam was a by-product of the Anglo-French operations against China in the late 'fifties and was part of the general offensive of the Western powers which finally opened up the whole of the Far East to Western trade and cultural influence. When the national spirit of Vietnam revived, it was under the leadership no longer of the Nguyen dynasty and the mandarinate, but of French-speaking intellectuals who drew their

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G. F. Hudson

Two Styles, One Poet

The Collected Poems of Edith Sitwell. *Macmillan.* 25s.

I DON'T suppose there is a living British poet whose reputation arouses more controversy to-day, among the younger poets, than that of Dame Edith Sitwell. At one extreme are those who dismiss her outright. At the opposite end are her admirers who see, especially in the *Later Poems*, an achievement comparable only to that of T. S. Eliot in his *Four Quartets*. Now that her *Collected Poems* have been published it is on the work found in this book that I imagine she would want to be judged.

Her early poems deal almost exclusively with childhood. The language has a vividness and an immediacy; there is the delight with sounds and rhythm. The properties are also part of childhood and the nursery. Many of the fantastic images belong to a child's limited verbal but concrete expressions in his translation of the physical world. How she loves flowers. She examines each leaf, bud, stem, texture, myopically, and like a living pun finds parallels in other growing things. These poems of childhood culminate in *Colonel Fantock*.

But from the start it is apparent that she writes in two quite separate styles. There are poems like

Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again;

and parallel with this pronounced rhythm are the more reflective poems, nostalgic, autobiographical.

And we shall remember nursery afternoons
When the small music-box of the sweet snow
Gave half-forgotten tunes, and our nurse told
Us tales that fell with the same tinkling notes . . .
"Once on a time," she said, "and long ago."

There is also in her early poems the beginning of a manner which later will have serious repercussions. She excludes the immediacy of the small acts of everyday life and instead peoples her poems with Greek and Roman mythology and literary borrowings. There is also something of the Pre-Raphaelites, not only in this manner, but also in the language. When she is not writing in the nursery-jingle, the staccato-rhythm, style, the language is hazy and rhetorical filled with nymphs, satyrs, sylvan trees. This Pre-Raphaelite nostalgia for a dim past and its appropriate language can, at its worst, result in a poem like *Elegy On A Dead Fashion*. Yet she can revert to her other style, soon after this, and write the very effective and vivid *Gold Coast Customs*.

Her *Façade* sequence is the most consistent in the entire book. Much of the childhood material has now been sophisticated. The rhythms are jazzed up by internal rhyme and assonance. The result is a gay, gaudy, often zany nonsense—still divorced from the contemporary world. When the "outside" is introduced it takes the form of an anarchistic picture-postcard. But for all its technical brilliance, *Façade* still remains rooted to the nursery.

Great Snoring and Norwich
A dish of pease porridge
The clock of Troy Town
Sounds one o'clock; brown
Honey bees in the clover
Are half the seas over,
And Time is a-boring,
From Troy to Great Snoring.
But Time the grey mouse,
Can't wake up the house,
For Old King Priam
Is sleepy as I am.

In her *Later Poems* childhood has been left behind, the short line has been replaced by the longer line. But the two separate styles still continue, and are more fully developed. What was used previously for "the past" now has changed to deal with contemporary themes. And although her subjects couldn't be more contemporary: War, The Atom Bomb; she is defeated by her language which lacks any sense of immediacy. Her other style now appears only in the short songs and lyrics. It is this duality which, I think, is responsible for the controversy about Dame Edith Sitwell's work. Unfortunately the majority of the *Later Poems* resort to the manner of her rhetorical style. Part of this appears to be inherent in her method, of having to rely on her reading rather than on the small acts of personal experience which give the immediacy to her other use of language and its effective poems.

Her achievement—and it is a considerable one—will, I think, rest on those early poems of childhood, on some of the *Bucolic Comedies*, *Colonel Fantock*, *Façade*, *Gold Coast Customs*, and on the excellent songs and lyrics like "In The Summer When No One Is Cold" which are scattered through the *Later Poems*.

Norman Levine

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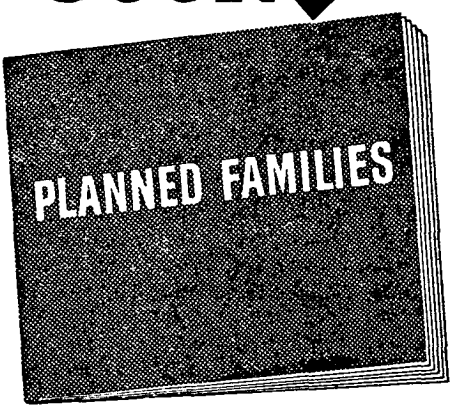

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About Our Authors

MELVIN J. LASKY was born in New York in 1920. He studied at New York's City College and the University of Michigan, was briefly a travel guide at the Statue of Liberty, and was a precocious contributor to *Partisan Review*, *Politics*, and other periodicals. During the war he served in Europe as an officer with the Seventh Army. Demobilised in Berlin, he has remained in that city, first as a freelance writer on German affairs for various American newspapers, and then as founder and editor of *Der Monat*, which is to Germany more or less whatever it is that ENCOUNTER is to England. *Der Monat*, which now has a circulation of over 20,000, was originally sponsored by the occupation authorities; but after a few years, it "chose freedom" and the less irksome generosity of the Ford Foundation. Mr. Lasky's travel impressions of Japan appeared in issues 2 and 3 of ENCOUNTER. More recently, he wrote about "The Sovietologists" in our September 1957 number. In addition to his editorship of *Der Monat*, Mr. Lasky has edited two numbers of the annual *Anchor Review*, published by Doubleday in New York, and writes occasionally for the New York Times Magazine on German and European affairs. A minor point: while at City College, Mr. Lasky was the editor of *The Student Chronicle*, a magazine put out by students who were specialising in history. His assistant editor was Irving Kristol. Both gentlemen look back with nostalgia on this episode: it was the only magazine to show a handsome profit that either has hitherto been fated to edit.

Robin Marris writes:

Born 1924 a few hours before April 1st. Educated Bedales and King's College, Cambridge. Economist. Have been Fellow of King's College since 1951. Between graduating at Cambridge in 1947 and returning as a don, worked in the Central Economic Planning Staff, in the Treasury, and in the Research Division of the Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva. Have published academic articles on theoretical and applied economics, and journalistic articles on economic aspects of politics. Am on Editorial Board of *Review of Economic Studies* and *Socialist Commentary*. In 1953 published a Fabian Pamphlet entitled "The Machinery of Economic Policy" which was badly received both inside the Labour Party and out. First book, *Economic Arithmetic*, is being published by Macmillan this August. Have been a socialist since the age of 12.

Frank Littler writes:

My home county is Lancashire, and except for the war years I lived there until 1947. I have done some book reviewing for the *Tablet*, contribute to *Golf Illustrated*, and have written for the *Spectator* on subjects which include jai alai, Irish immigration, French Rugby League football, horse trials, and Anglo-Portuguese affinities. My first contribution to a jazz publication —*Jazz Monthly*—was made exactly 25 years after I bought my first hot record. I have seen something of Beale Street, the Yazoo Basin, and what used to be Storyville, but the only jazz musician I have ever talked to privately was Muggsy Spanier in San Francisco. When he got back on to the stand he said fifty times as much.

The illustration in Stephen Potter's article is by Lt.-Col. Frank Wilson.

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